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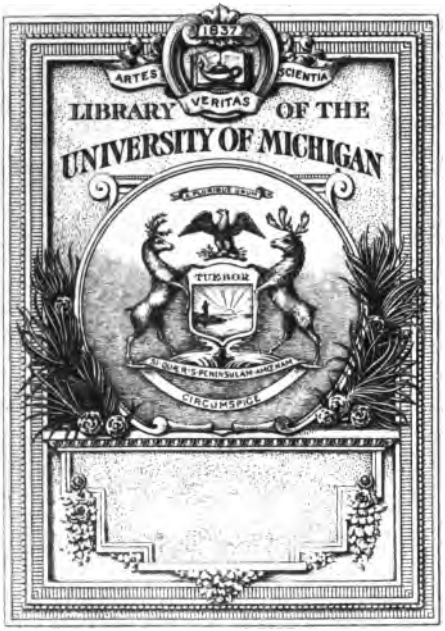
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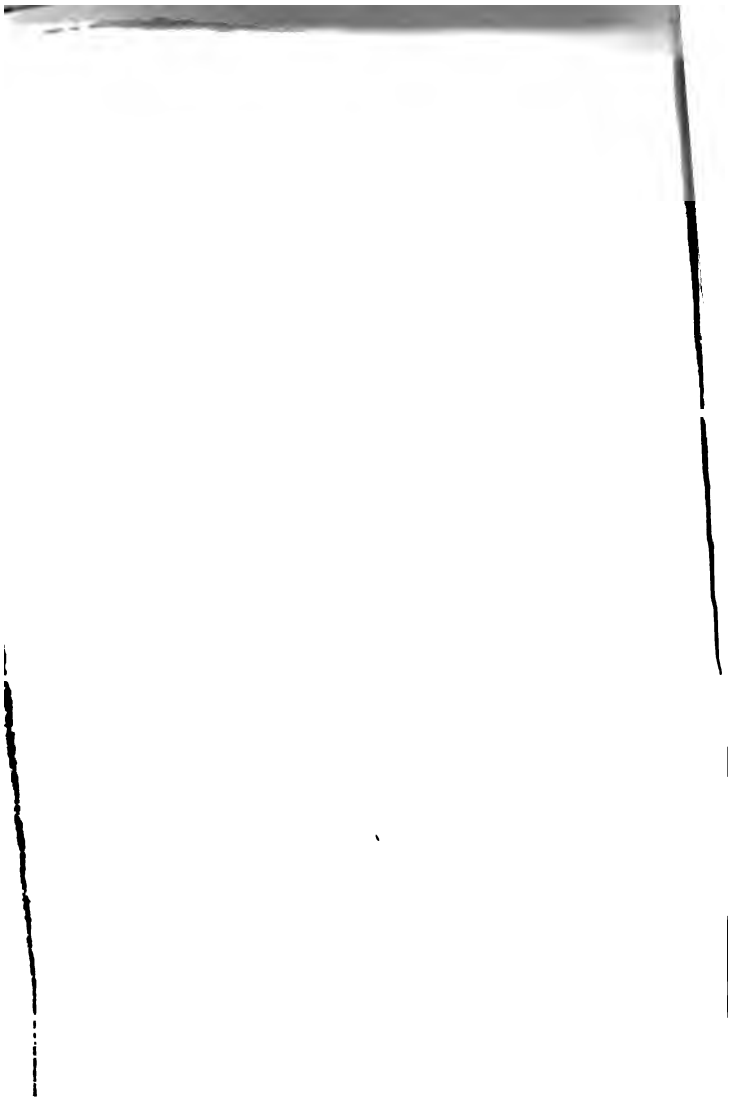

UNIV. OF MICH.

'Tis morning; and the sun with ruddy orb
Ascending fires the horizon.

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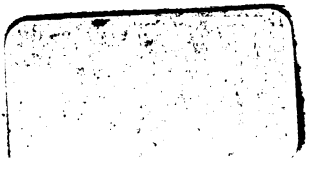

THE LIFE AND WORKS

OF

WILLIAM COWPER,

BY

ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ. LL.D.

VOL. IX.

THE HARE AT EDMONTON

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY BALDWIN AND CRADOCK, PATERNOSTER ROW.
1835.

UNIV. OF MICH.

THE

WORKS

OF

WILLIAM COWPER, Esq.

COMPRISING

HIS POEMS,

CORRESPONDENCE, AND TRANSLATIONS.

WITH

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

BY THE EDITOR,

ROBERT SOUTHEY, Esq. LL.D.
POET LAUREATE, ETC.

VOL. IX.

LONDON:
BALDWIN AND CRADOCK,
PATERNOSTER ROW.
1836.

CHISWICK PRESS:
C. WHITTINGHAM, COLLEGE HOUSE.

Brad. U.
English
Department
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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE present volume contains Cowper's Translations from Madame Guion, the Pieces originally published as the second volume of his Poems, and a few of those minor Poems which were not published till after his decease.

The Translations from Madame Guion appeared with the following Title, Dedication, and Preface.

POEMS,

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

OF

MADAME DE LA MOTHE GUION,

BY THE LATE

WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF "THE TASK."

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

SOME ORIGINAL POEMS OF MR. COWPER,

NOT INSERTED IN HIS WORKS.

LONDON:—PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON AND CO.
NO. 72, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.
1801.

CHISWICK PRESS:
C. WHITTINGHAM, COLLEGE HOUSE.

Grad. of
English
Diaspora
3-28-78
16800

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NO. 72, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.
1801.

TO

THE REV. WILLIAM BULL,

THESE TRANSLATIONS OF A FEW OF THE SPIRITUAL SONGS

OF THE EXCELLENT

MADAME GUION,

MADE AT HIS EXPRESS DESIRE, ARE DEDICATED

BY

HIS AFFECTIONATE FRIEND AND SERVANT,

WILLIAM COWPER.

July, 1782.

PREFACE.

It seems needless, if not impertinent, in an obscure individual, to say any thing in praise of the Author of the Task. It is of more consequence to inform the reader of the circumstances that have led to this publication. About twenty years ago, a very dear and venerable friend[1] introduced me to the truly great and amiable Mr. Cowper. This gave rise to a friendship, which increased with every repeated interview; and for several years I had the pleasure of spending an afternoon with him every week. At length this delightful intercourse was terminated, by his removal to a distant situation, and the painful approaches of that event which dissolves every social connexion.

[1] The Rev. John Newton, Rector of St. Mary Woolnoth, London.

One day, amusing myself with the poetical works of the celebrated Madame Guion, I was struck with the peculiar beauty of some of her poems, as well as edified with the piety and devotion of which they are strongly expressive. I mentioned them to Mr. Cowper; and, partly to amuse a solitary hour, partly to keep in exercise the genius of this incomparable man, I requested him to put a few of the poems into an English dress. Afterward, during my absence upon a journey, I received a letter, in which Mr. Cowper says, "I have but little leisure, strange as it may seem. That little I devoted for a month after your departure to the translation of Madame Guion. I have made fair copies of all the pieces I have produced on this last occasion, and will put them into your hands when we meet. They are yours, to serve as you please; you may take and leave them as you like, for my purpose is already served. They have amused me, and I have no farther demand upon them." On my return, Mr. Cowper presented me with these translations, to which he added the Letter to a Protestant Lady in France, and the Poem on Friendship.

The idea of printing them was afterwards suggested to Mr. Cowper; and he gave his full consent, intending to revise them before I should send them to the press. Various circumstances prevented him from doing this; and the poems would probably have still

remained unpublished, if it had not been found that several copies of them had already got abroad. The editor, therefore, had reason to believe, that they would otherwise have made their appearance in a state far less correct than if printed from the original manuscript. Nor can he imagine that, even in their present form, they will on the whole, tend to diminish the well deserved reputation of their excellent author.

To infer that the peculiarities of Madame Guion's theological sentiments were adopted either by Mr. Cowper or by the editor, would be almost as absurd as to suppose the inimitable translator of Homer to have been a pagan. He reverenced her piety, admired her genius, and judged that several of her poems would be read with pleasure and edification by serious and candid persons.

I have taken the liberty to add the Stanzas subjoined to the Bills of Mortality, which had been published a few years past at Northampton; and the Epitaph, which had appeared in a periodical publication. They sufficiently mark the genius of their author, correspond with the other parts of this small volume, and have not before been printed in a uniform manner with his poems.

WILLIAM BULL.

NEWPORT-PAGNELL,
6th of June, 1801.

The second Volume had no other preface than the brief advertisement prefixed to the Task. It was thus entitled,

THE TASK.

BY

WILLIAM COWPER,

OF THE INNER TEMPLE, ESQ.

Fit surculus arbor. ANON.

LONDON :—PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON AND CO.
NO. 72, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.
1784.

"The motto of the whole," says Cowper to Mr. Unwin, "is *Fit surculus arbor*. If you can put the author's name under it, do so: if not, it must go without one, for I know not to whom to ascribe it. It was a motto taken by a certain Prince of Orange in the year 1733, but not to a poem of his own writing, or indeed to any poem at all, but, as I think, to a medal."—Letter, Oct. 2, 1784.

If the motto was not composed for the medal, (which is most probable,) it may perhaps have been taken from an emblem. The emblem itself occurs among those engraved by Crispinus Passæus, for which George Wither wrote a volume of verses: it is

the forty-sixth of the first book; but the motto there is *Tandem fit arbor.*

The Index to the Task (for which, as well as for the parallel passages, the Editor repeats his thanks to Mr. Peace,) will be found so useful that any edition of that delightful poem must henceforth without such an appendage be deemed deficient.

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THE

POEMS

OF

WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

TRANSLATIONS

FROM THE

FRENCH OF MADAME DE LA MOTHE GUION.

THE NATIVITY.

"Tis folly all!—let me no more be told
Of Parian porticos, and roofs of gold;
Delightful views of nature, dress'd by art,
Enchant no longer this indifferent heart;
The Lord of all things, in his humble birth,
Makes mean the proud magnificence of earth;
The straw, the manger, and the mouldering wall,
Eclipse its lustre; and I scorn it all.
Canals, and fountains, and delicious vales,
Green slopes and plains, whose plenty never fails;

Deep rooted groves, whose heads sublimely rise,
Earth-born, and yet ambitious of the skies,
The abundant foliage of whose gloomy shades
Vainly the sun in all its power invades,
Where warbled airs of sprightly birds resound,
Whose verdure lives while Winter scowls around;
Rocks, lofty mountains, caverns dark and deep,
And torrents raving down the rugged steep,
Smooth downs, whose fragrant herbs the spirits cheer,
Meads crown'd with flowers, streams musical and clear,
Whose silver waters and whose murmurs join
Their artless charms, to make the scene divine;
The fruitful vineyard, and the furrow'd plain,
That seems a rolling sea of golden grain,
All, all have lost the charms they once possess'd;
An infant God reigns sovereign in my breast;
From Bethlehem's bosom I no more will rove;
There dwells the Saviour, and there rests my love.
Ye mightier rivers, that with sounding force,
Urge down the valleys your impetuous course!
Winds, clouds, and lightnings! and, ye waves, whose heads,
Curl'd into monstrous forms, the seaman dreads!
Horrid abyss, where all experience fails,
Spread with the wreck of planks and shatter'd sails;
On whose broad back grim Death triumphant rides,
While havock floats on all thy swelling tides,
Thy shores a scene of ruin, strew'd around
With vessels bulged, and bodies of the drown'd!
Ye fish that sport beneath the boundless waves,
And rest, secure from man, in rocky caves;

Swift-darting sharks, and whales of hideous size,
Whom all the aquatic world with terror eyes!
Had I but faith immoveable and true,
I might defy the fiercest storm, like you.
The world, a more disturb'd and boisterous sea,
When Jesus shows a smile, affrights not me;
He hides me, and in vain the billows roar,
Break harmless at my feet, and leave the shore.

Thou azure vault, where through the gloom of night,
Thick sown, we see such countless worlds of light!
Thou Moon, whose car encompassing the skies,
Restores lost nature to our wondering eyes,
Again retiring when the brighter Sun
Begins the course he seems in haste to run,
Behold him where he shines! His rapid rays,
Themselves unmeasured, measure all our days;
Nothing impedes the race he would pursue,
Nothing escapes his penetrating view,
A thousand lands confess his quickening heat,
And all he cheers are fruitful, fair, and sweet.

Far from enjoying what these scenes disclose,
I feel the thorn, alas! but miss the rose:
Too well I know this aching heart requires
More solid good to fill its vast desires;
In vain they represent His matchless might,
Who call'd them out of deep primeval night;
Their form and beauty but augment my woe:
I seek the Giver of those charms they show:
Nor, Him beside, throughout the world He made,
Lives there in whom I trust for cure or aid.

Infinite God, thou great unrival'd ONE!
Whose glory makes a blot of yonder sun;

Compared with thine, how dim his beauty seems,
How quench'd the radiance of his golden beams!
Thou art my bliss, the light by which I move;
In Thee alone dwells all that I can love;
All darkness flies when Thou art pleased to appear,
A sudden spring renews the fading year;
Where'er I turn I see thy power and grace,
The watchful guardians of our heedless race;
Thy various creatures in one strain agree,
All, in all times and places, speak of Thee;
Even I, with trembling heart and stammering tongue,
Attempt thy praise, and join the general song.

Almighty Former of this wondrous plan,
Faintly reflected in thine image, Man,—
Holy and just, the greatness of whose name
Fills and supports this universal frame,
Diffused throughout the infinitude of space,
Who art Thyself thine own vast dwelling place;
Soul of our soul, whom yet no sense of ours
Discerns, eluding our most active powers;
Encircling shades attend thine awful throne,
That veil thy face, and keep thee still unknown,
Unknown, though dwelling in our inmost part,
Lord of the thoughts, and Sovereign of the heart!

Repeat the charming truth that never tires,
No God is like the God my soul desires!
He at whose voice heaven trembles, even He,
Great as he is, knows how to stoop to me.
Lo! there he lies,—that smiling infant said,
"Heaven, earth, and sea exist!"—and they obey'd.
Even He, whose Being swells beyond the skies,
Is born of woman, lives, and mourns, and dies;

Eternal and Immortal, seems to cast
That glory from his brows, and breathes his last.
Trivial and vain the works that man has wrought,
How do they shrink and vanish at the thought!
Sweet solitude, and scene of my repose!
This rustic sight assuages all my woes.—
That crib contains the Lord, whom I adore;
And earth's a shade, that I pursue no more.
He is my firm support, my rock, my tower,
I dwell secure beneath his sheltering power,
And hold this mean retreat for ever dear,
For all I love, my soul's delight, is here.
I see the Almighty swathed in infant bands,
Tied helpless down the thunder-bearer's hands,
And, in this shed, that mystery discern,
Which Faith and Love, and they alone, can learn.
Ye tempests, spare the slumbers of your Lord!
Ye zephyrs, all your whisper'd sweets afford!
Confess the God, that guides the rolling year;
Heaven, do him homage; and thou, Earth, revere!
Ye shepherds, monarchs, sages, hither bring
Your hearts an offering, and adore your King!
Pure be those hearts, and rich in faith and love;
Join in his praise, the harmonious world above;
To Bethlehem haste, rejoice in his repose,
And praise him there for all that He bestows!
Man, busy Man, alas! can ill afford
To obey the summons, and attend the Lord;
Perverted reason revels and runs wild,
By glittering shows of pomp and wealth beguiled,
And blind to genuine excellence and grace,
Finds not her author in so mean a place.

Ye unbelieving! learn a wiser part,
Distrust your erring sense, and search your heart;
There, soon ye shall perceive a kindling flame
Glow for that infant God, from whom it came;
Resist not, quench not, that divine desire,
Melt all your adamant in heavenly fire!

Not so will I requite thee, gentle Love!
Yielding and soft this heart shall ever prove;
And every heart beneath thy power should fall,
Glad to submit, could mine contain them all.
But I am poor; oblation I have none,
None for a Saviour, but Himself alone:
Whate'er I render Thee, from Thee it came;
And, if I give my body to the flame,
My patience, love, and energy divine
Of heart and soul and spirit, all are thine.
Ah, vain attempt to expunge the mighty score!
The more I pay, I owe thee still the more.

Upon my meanness, poverty, and guilt,
The trophy of thy glory shall be built;
My self-disdain shall be the unshaken base,
And my deformity its fairest grace;
For destitute of good and rich in ill,
Must be my state and my description still.

And do I grieve at such an humbling lot?
Nay, but I cherish and enjoy the thought.
Vain pageantry and pomp of earth, adieu!
I have no wish, no memory for you;
The more I feel my misery, I adore
The sacred Inmate of my soul the more;
Rich in his love, I feel my noblest pride
Spring from the sense of having nought beside.

In Thee I find wealth, comfort, virtue, might;
My wanderings prove Thy wisdom infinite;
All that I have I give thee; and then see
All contrarieties unite in thee;
For Thou hast join'd them, taking up our woe,
And pouring out thy bliss on worms below,
By filling with thy grace and love divine
A gulf of evil in this heart of mine.
This is, indeed, to bid the valleys rise,
And the hills sink,—'tis matching Earth and Skies!
I feel my weakness, thank thee, and deplore
An aching heart, that throbs to thank thee more;
The more I love thee, I the more reprove
A soul so lifeless, and so slow to love;
Till, on a deluge of thy mercy toss'd,
I plunge into that sea, and there am lost.

GOD NEITHER KNOWN NOR LOVED BY THE WORLD.

Ye Linnets, let us try, beneath this grove,
Which shall be loudest in our Maker's praise!
In quest of some forlorn retreat I rove,
For all the world is blind, and wanders from his ways.

That God alone should prop the sinking soul,
Fills them with rage against his empire now:
I traverse earth in vain from pole to pole,
To seek one simple heart, set free from all below.

They speak of love, yet little feel its sway,
  While in their bosoms many an idol lurks;
Their base desires, well satisfied, obey,
  Leave the Creator's hand, and lean upon his works.

'Tis therefore I can dwell with man no more;
  Your fellowship, ye warblers! suits me best:
Pure love has lost its price, though prized of yore,
  Profaned by modern tongues, and slighted as a jest.

My God, who form'd you for his praise alone,
  Beholds his purpose well fulfill'd in you;
Come, let us join the choir before his throne,
  Partaking in his praise with spirits just and true!

Yes, I will always love; and, as I ought,
  Tune to the praise of Love my ceaseless voice;
Preferring Love too vast for human thought,
  In spite of erring men, who cavil at my choice.

Why have I not a thousand thousand hearts,
  Lord of my soul! that they might all be thine?
If thou approve,—the zeal thy smile imparts,
  How should it ever fail! can such a fire decline?

Love pure and holy, is a deathless fire;
  Its object heavenly, it must ever blaze:
Eternal love a God must needs inspire,
  When once he wins the heart, and fits it for his praise.

Self-love dismiss'd,—'tis then we live indeed,—
  In her embrace, death, only death is found:
Come, then, one noble effort, and succeed,
  Cast off the chain of self with which thy soul is bound!

Oh! I could cry, that all the world might hear,
Ye self-tormentors, love your God alone;
Let his unequall'd excellence be dear,
Dear to your inmost souls, and make him all your own!

They hear me not.—Alas! how fond to rove
In endless chase of folly's specious lure!
'Tis here alone, beneath this shady grove,
I taste the sweets of truth,—here only am secure.

THE SWALLOW.

I AM fond of the swallow;—I learn from her flight,
Had I skill to improve it, a lesson of love:
How seldom on earth do we see her alight!
She dwells in the skies, she is ever above.

It is on the wing that she takes her repose,
Suspended and poised in the regions of air;
'Tis not in our fields that her sustenance grows,
It is wing'd like herself, 'tis ethereal fare.

She comes in the spring, all the summer she stays,
And, dreading the cold, still follows the sun;—
So, true to our Love, we should covet his rays,
And the place where he shines not, immediately shun.

Our light should be Love, and our nourishment prayer;
It is dangerous food that we find upon earth:
The fruit of this world is beset with a snare,
In itself it is hurtful, as vile in its birth.

'Tis rarely, if ever, she settles below,
And only when building a nest for her young;
Were it not for her brood, she would never bestow
A thought upon any thing filthy as dung.

Let us leave it ourselves ('tis a mortal abode,)
To bask every moment in infinite Love;
Let us fly the dark winter, and follow the road
That leads to the dayspring appearing above.

THE

TRIUMPH OF HEAVENLY LOVE DESIRED.

Ah! reign, wherever man is found,
My Spouse, beloved and divine!
Then I am rich, and I abound,
When every human heart is thine.

A thousand sorrows pierce my soul,
To think that all are not thine own:
Ah! be adored from pole to pole;
Where is thy zeal? arise; be known!

All hearts are cold, in every place,
Yet earthly good with warmth pursue;
Dissolve them with a flash of grace,
Thaw these of ice, and give us new!

A FIGURATIVE DESCRIPTION

OF THE

PROCEDURE OF DIVINE LOVE,

IN BRINGING A SOUL TO THE POINT OF SELF-RENUNCIATION AND ABSOLUTE ACQUIESCENCE.

'Twas my purpose on a day,
To embark and sail away;
As I climb'd the vessel's side,
Love was sporting in the tide;
" Come," he said, " ascend! make haste,
Launch into the boundless waste."

Many mariners were there,
Having each his separate care;
They that row'd us held their eyes
Fix'd upon the starry skies;
Others steer'd, or turn'd the sails
To receive the shifting gales.

Love, with power divine supplied,
Suddenly my courage tried;
In a moment it was night,
Ship and skies were out of sight;
On the briny wave I lay,
Floating rushes all my stay.

Did I with resentment burn
At this unexpected turn?
Did I wish myself on shore,
Never to forsake it more?
No:—" My soul," I cried, " be still!
If I must be lost, I will."

Next he hasten'd to convey
Both my frail supports away;
Seized my rushes; bade the waves
Yawn into a thousand graves:
Down I went, and sunk as lead,
Ocean closing o'er my head.

Still, however, life was safe;
And I saw him turn and laugh:
" Friend," he cried, " adieu! lie low,
While the wintry storms shall blow;
When the spring has calm'd the main,
You shall rise and float again."

Soon I saw him, with dismay,
Spread his plumes and soar away;
Now I mark his rapid flight,
Now he leaves my aching sight;
He is gone whom I adore,
'Tis in vain to seek him more.

How I trembled then and fear'd,
When my love had disappear'd!
" Wilt thou leave me thus," I cried,
" Whelm'd beneath the rolling tide?"
Vain attempt to reach his ear!
Love was gone, and would not hear.

Ah! return, and love me still;
See me subject to thy will!
Frown with wrath, or smile with grace,
Only let me see thy face!
Evil I have none to fear,
All is good, if Thou art near.

Yet he leaves me,—cruel fate!
Leaves me in my lost estate!
Have I sinn'd? Oh say wherein?
Tell me, and forgive my sin!
King and Lord, whom I adore,
Shall I see thy face no more?

Be not angry; I resign,
Henceforth, all my will to thine:
I consent that thou depart,
Though thine absence breaks my heart;
Go then, and for ever too;
All is right that thou wilt do.

This was just what Love intended,
He was now no more offended;
Soon as I became a child,
Love return'd to me and smiled:
Never strife shall more betide
'Twixt the Bridegroom and his Bride.

A CHILD OF GOD

LONGING TO SEE HIM BELOVED.

THERE'S not an echo round me,
But I am glad should learn
How pure a fire has found me,
The love with which I burn.
For none attends with pleasure
To what I would reveal;
They slight me out of measure,
And laugh at all I feel.

The rocks receive less proudly
The story of my flame;
When I approach, they loudly
Reverberate his name.
I speak to them of sadness,
And comforts at a stand;
They bid me look for gladness,
And better days at hand.

Far from all habitation,
I heard a happy sound,
Big with the consolation,
That I have often found;
I said, "My lot is sorrow,
My grief has no alloy;"
The rocks replied—"To-morrow,
To-morrow brings thee joy."

These sweet and secret tidings,
What bliss it is to hear!
For, spite of all my chidings,
My weakness and my fear,
No sooner I receive them,
Than I forget my pain,
And happy to believe them,
I love as much again.

I fly to scenes romantic,
Where never men resort;
For in an age so frantic
Impiety is sport;
For riot and confusion
They barter things above,
Condemning, as delusion,
The joy of perfect love.

In this sequester'd corner,
None hears what I express;
Deliver'd from the scorner,
What peace do I possess!
Beneath the boughs reclining,
Or roving o'er the wild,
I live as undesigning,
And harmless as a child.

No troubles here surprise me;
I innocently play,
While Providence supplies me,
And guards me all the day:
My dear and kind defender
Preserves me safely here,
From men of pomp and splendour,
Who fill a child with fear.

ASPIRATIONS OF THE SOUL AFTER GOD.

My Spouse! in whose presence I live,
Sole object of all my desires,
Who know'st what a flame I conceive,
And canst easily double its fires;
How pleasant is all that I meet!
From fear of adversity free,
I find even sorrow made sweet;
Because 'tis assign'd me by Thee.

Transported I see thee display
Thy riches and glory divine;
I have only my life to repay,
Take what I would gladly resign.

Thy will is the treasure I seek,
For thou art as faithful as strong;
There let me obedient and meek,
Repose myself all the day long.

My spirit and faculties fail;
Oh finish what love has begun!
Destroy what is sinful and frail,
And dwell in the soul thou hast won!
Dear theme of my wonder and praise,
I cry, who is worthy as Thou!
I can only be silent and gaze:
'Tis all that is left to me now.

Oh glory in which I am lost,
Too deep for the plummet of thought;
On an ocean of Deity toss'd,
I am swallow'd, I sink into nought.
Yet lost and absorb'd as I seem,
I chant to the praise of my king;
And, though overwhelm'd by the theme,
Am happy whenever I sing.

GRATITUDE AND LOVE TO GOD.

All are indebted much to thee,
But I far more than all,
From many a deadly snare set free,
And raised from many a fall.
Overwhelm me, from above,
Daily, with thy boundless love!

What bonds of gratitude I feel
No language can declare;
Beneath the oppressive weight I reel,
'Tis more than I can bear:
When shall I that blessing prove,
To return thee Love for Love?

Spirit of Charity, dispense
Thy grace to every heart;
Expel all other spirits thence,
Drive self from every part;
Charity divine, draw nigh,
Break the chains in which we lie!

All selfish souls, whate'er they feign,
Have still a slavish lot;
They boast of liberty in vain,
Of Love, and feel it not.
He whose bosom glows with Thee,
He, and he alone, is free.

Oh blessedness, all bliss above,
When thy pure fires prevail!
Love only teaches what is Love;
All other lessons fail:
We learn its name, but not its powers,
Experience only makes it ours.

HAPPY SOLITUDE—UNHAPPY MEN.

My heart is easy, and my burden light;
I smile, though sad, when Thou art in my sight:
The more my woes in secret I deplore,
I taste thy goodness and I love the more.

There, while a solemn stillness reigns around,
Faith, Love, and Hope within my soul abound;
And while the world suppose me lost in care,
The joys of angels, unperceived, I share.

Thy creatures wrong thee, O thou sovereign Good!
Thou art not loved, because not understood;
This grieves me most, that vain pursuits beguile
Ungrateful men, regardless of thy smile.

Frail beauty and false honour are adored;
While Thee they scorn, and trifle with thy Word;
Pass, unconcern'd, a Saviour's sorrows by;
And hunt their ruin with a zeal to die.

LIVING WATER.

The fountain in its source
  No drought of summer fears;
The farther it pursues its course,
  The nobler it appears.

But shallow cisterns yield
  A scanty short supply;
The morning sees them amply fill'd,
  At evening they are dry.

TRUTH AND DIVINE LOVE

REJECTED BY THE WORLD.

O LOVE, of pure and heavenly birth!
O simple Truth, scarce known on earth!
Whom men resist with stubborn will;
And, more perverse and daring still,
Smother and quench, with reasonings vain,
While Error and Deception reign.

Whence comes it, that, your power the same
As His on high, from whence you came,
Ye rarely find a listening ear,
Or heart that makes you welcome here?—
Because ye bring reproach and pain,
Where'er ye visit, in your train.

The world is proud, and cannot bear
The scorn and calumny ye share;
The praise of men the mark they mean,
They fly the place where ye are seen;
Pure Love, with scandal in the rear,
Suits not the vain, it costs too dear.

Then, let the price be what it may,
Though poor, I am prepared to pay;
Come shame, come sorrow; spite of tears,
Weakness, and heart-oppressing fears;
One soul, at least, shall not repine,
To give you room; come, reign in mine!

DIVINE JUSTICE AMIABLE.

THOU hast no lightnings, O thou just!
Or I their force should know;
And if thou strike me into dust,
My soul approves the blow.

The heart that values less its ease
Than it adores thy ways,
In thine avenging anger sees
A subject of its praise.

Pleased I could lie, conceal'd and lost,
In shades of central night;
Not to avoid thy wrath, thou know'st,
But lest I grieve thy sight.

Smite me, O Thou, whom I provoke!
And I will love thee still;
The well-deserved and righteous stroke
Shall please me, though it kill.

Am I not worthy to sustain
The worst thou canst devise?
And dare I seek thy throne again,
And meet thy sacred eyes?

Far from afflicting, Thou art kind;
And in my saddest hours,
An unction of thy grace I find,
Pervading all my powers.

Alas! Thou sparest me yet again;
And when thy wrath should move,
Too gentle to endure my pain,
Thou sooth'st me with thy love.

I have no punishment to fear;
But, ah! that smile from Thee
Imparts a pang far more severe
Than woe itself would be.

THE SOUL THAT LOVES GOD FINDS HIM EVERY WHERE.

Oh Thou, by long experience tried,
Near whom no grief can long abide;
My Love! how full of sweet content
I pass my years of banishment!

All scenes alike engaging prove
To souls impress'd with sacred Love!
Where'er they dwell, they dwell in Thee;
In heaven, in earth, or on the sea.

To me remains nor place nor time;
My country is in every clime;
I can be calm and free from care
On any shore, since God is there.

While place we seek, or place we shun,
The soul finds happiness in none;
But with a God to guide our way,
'Tis equal joy to go or stay.

Could I be cast where Thou art not,
That were indeed a dreadful lot;
But regions none remote I call,
Secure of finding God in all.

My country, Lord, art Thou alone;
Nor other can I claim or own;
The point where all my wishes meet;
My law, my love; life's only sweet!

I hold by nothing here below;
Appoint my journey, and I go;
Though pierced by scorn, oppress'd by pride,
I feel thee good, feel nought beside.

No frowns of men can hurtful prove
To souls on fire with heavenly Love;
Though men and devils both condemn,
No gloomy days arise from them.

Ah then! to His embrace repair;
My soul, thou art no stranger there;
There Love divine shall be thy guard,
And peace and safety thy reward.

THE

TESTIMONY OF DIVINE ADOPTION.

How happy are the new-born race;
Partakers of adopting grace,
  How pure the bliss they share!
Hid from the world and all its eyes,
Within their heart the blessing lies,
  And conscience feels it there.

The moment we believe, 'tis ours;
And if we love with all our powers

The God from whom it came,
And if we serve with hearts sincere,
'Tis still discernible and clear,
An undisputed claim.

But, ah! if foul and wilful sin
Stain and dishonour us within,
Farewell the joy we knew;
Again the slaves of Nature's sway,
In labyrinths of our own we stray,
Without a guide or clue.

The chaste and pure who fear to grieve
The gracious Spirit they receive,
His work distinctly trace;
And, strong in undissembling love,
Boldly assert and clearly prove
Their hearts his dwelling place.

Oh messenger of dear delight,
Whose voice dispels the deepest night,
Sweet peace-proclaiming Dove!
With thee at hand, to soothe our pains,
No wish unsatisfied remains,
No task but that of Love.

'Tis Love unites what Sin divides;
The centre, where all bliss resides;
To which the soul once brought,
Reclining on the first great Cause,
From his abounding sweetness draws
Peace passing human thought.

Sorrow foregoes its nature there,
And life assumes a tranquil air,

Divested of its woes;
There sovereign goodness soothes the breast,
Till then incapable of rest,
In sacred sure repose.

DIVINE LOVE ENDURES NO RIVAL.

Love is the Lord whom I obey,
Whose will transported I perform;
The centre of my rest, my stay,
Love's all in all to me, myself a worm.

For uncreated charms I burn,
Oppress'd by slavish fear no more;
For One in whom I may discern,
Even when he frowns, a sweetness I adore.

He little loves Him who complains,
And finds him rigorous and severe;
His heart is sordid, and he feigns,
Though loud in boasting of a soul sincere.

Love causes grief, but 'tis to move
And stimulate the slumbering mind;
And he has never tasted love
Who shuns a pang so graciously design'd.

Sweet is the cross, above all sweets,
To souls enamour'd with thy smiles;
The keenest woe life ever meets,
Love strips of all its terrors, and beguiles.

'Tis just that God should not be dear
Where self engrosses all the thought,
And groans and murmurs make it clear,
Whatever else is loved, the Lord is not.

The love of Thee flows just as much
As that of ebbing self subsides;
Our hearts, their scantiness is such,
Bear not the conflict of two rival tides.

Both cannot govern in one soul;
Then let self-love be dispossess'd;
The Love of God deserves the whole,
And will not dwell with so despised a guest.

SELF-DIFFIDENCE.

SOURCE of love, and light of day,
Tear me from myself away;
Every view and thought of mine
Cast into the mould of thine;
Teach, O teach this faithless heart
A consistent constant part;
Or, if it must live to grow
More rebellious, break it now!

Is it thus that I requite
Grace and goodness infinite?
Every trace of every boon
Cancell'd and erased so soon!
Can I grieve Thee, whom I love;
Thee, in whom I live and move?

If my sorrow touch thee still,
Save me from so great an ill!

Oh! the oppressive, irksome weight
Felt in an uncertain state;
Comfort, peace, and rest adieu,
Should I prove at last untrue!
Still I choose thee, follow still
Every notice of thy will;
But, unstable, strangely weak,
Still let slip the good I seek.

Self-confiding wretch, I thought
I could serve thee as I ought,
Win thee, and deserve to feel
All the Love thou canst reveal!
Trusting self, a bruised reed,
Is to be deceived indeed.
Save me from this harm and loss,
Lest my gold turn all to dross!

Self is earthly—Faith alone
Makes an unseen world our own;
Faith relinquish'd, how we roam,
Feel our way, and leave our home!
Spurious gems our hopes entice,
While we scorn the pearl of price;
And, preferring servants' pay,
Cast the children's bread away.

THE ACQUIESCENCE OF PURE LOVE.

Love! if thy destined sacrifice am I,
Come slay thy victim, and prepare thy fires;
Plunged in thy depths of mercy, let me die
The death which every soul that lives desires!

I watch my hours, and see them fleet away;
The time is long that I have languish'd here;
Yet all my thoughts thy purposes obey,
With no reluctance, cheerful and sincere.

To me 'tis equal, whether Love ordain
My life or death, appoint me pain or ease;
My soul perceives no real ill in pain;
In ease or health no real good she sees.

One Good she covets, and that Good alone;
To choose thy will, from selfish bias free;
And to prefer a cottage to a throne,
And grief to comfort, if it pleases thee.

That we should bear the cross is thy command,
Die to the world, and live to self no more;
Suffer, unmoved, beneath the rudest hand,
As pleased when shipwreck'd as when safe on shore.

REPOSE IN GOD.

Blest! who, far from all mankind,
This world's shadows left behind,
Hears from Heaven a gentle strain
Whispering Love, and loves again.

Blest! who, free from self-esteem,
Dives into the great Supreme,
All desire beside discards,
Joys inferior none regards.

Blest! who in thy bosom seeks
Rest that nothing earthly breaks,
Dead to self and worldly things,
Lost in thee, thou King of kings!

Ye that know my secret fire,
Softly speak and soon retire;
Favour my divine repose,
Spare the sleep a God bestows.

GLORY TO GOD ALONE.

Oh loved! but not enough—though dearer far
Than self and its most loved enjoyments are;
None duly loves thee, but who, nobly free
From sensual objects, finds his all in Thee.

Glory of God! thou stranger here below,
Whom man nor knows, nor feels a wish to know;
Our Faith and Reason are both shock'd to find
Man in the post of honour—Thee behind.

Reason exclaims—"Let every creature fall,
Ashamed, abased, before the Lord of all;"
And Faith, o'erwhelm'd with such a dazzling blaze,
Feebly describes the beauty she surveys.

Yet man, dim-sighted man, and rash as blind,
Deaf to the dictates of his better mind,
In frantic competition dares the skies,
And claims precedence of the only wise.

Oh lost in vanity, till once self-known!
Nothing is great, or good, but God alone;
When thou shalt stand before his aweful face,
Then, at the last, thy pride shall know His place.

Glorious, Almighty, First, and without end!
When wilt thou melt the mountains and descend?
When wilt thou shoot abroad thy conquering rays,
And teach these atoms thou hast made, thy praise?

Thy Glory is the sweetest heaven I feel;
And, if I seek it with too fierce a zeal,
Thy Love, triumphant o'er a selfish will,
Taught me the passion, and inspires it still.

My reason, all my faculties, unite,
To make thy Glory their supreme delight;
Forbid it, fountain of my brightest days,
That I should rob thee, and usurp thy praise!

My soul! rest happy in thy low estate,
Nor hope, nor wish, to be esteem'd or great;
To take the impression of a will divine,
Be that thy glory, and those riches thine.

Confess Him righteous in his just decrees,
Love what he loves, and let his pleasure please;
Die daily; from the touch of sin recede;
Then thou hast crown'd him, and he reigns indeed.

SELF-LOVE AND TRUTH INCOMPATIBLE.

From thorny wilds a monster came,
That fill'd my soul with fear and shame;
The birds, forgetful of their mirth,
Droop'd at the sight, and fell to earth;
When thus a sage address'd mine ear,
Himself unconscious of a fear.

"Whence all this terror and surprise,
Distracted looks, and streaming eyes?
Far from the world and its affairs,
The joy it boasts, the pain it shares,
Surrender, without guile or art,
To God, an undivided heart;
The savage form, so fear'd before,
Shall scare your trembling soul no more;
For loathsome as the sight may be,
'Tis but the *Love of self* you see.
Fix all your love on God alone,
Choose but His will, and hate your own,
No fear shall in your path be found,
The dreary waste shall bloom around,
And you through all your happy days,
Shall bless his name, and sing his praise."

Oh lovely solitude, how sweet
The silence of this calm retreat!
Here Truth, the fair whom I pursue,
Gives all her beauty to my view;
The simple, unadorn'd display
Charms every pain and fear away.

O Truth, whom millions proudly slight;
O Truth, my treasure and delight;
Accept this tribute to thy name,
And this poor heart from which it came!

THE LOVE OF GOD, THE END OF LIFE.

SINCE life in sorrow must be spent,
So be it—I am well content,
And meekly wait my last remove,
Seeking only growth in love.

No bliss I seek, but to fulfil
In life, in death, thy lovely will;
No succours in my woes I want,
Save what Thou art pleased to grant.

Our days are number'd, let us spare
Our anxious hearts a needless care:
'Tis thine to number out our days;
Ours to give them to thy praise.

Love is our only business here,
Love, simple, constant, and sincere;
O blessed days, thy servants see!
Spent, O Lord! in pleasing Thee.

LOVE FAITHFUL IN THE ABSENCE OF THE BELOVED.

In vain ye woo me to your harmless joys,
Ye pleasant bowers, remote from strife and noise;
Your shades, the witnesses of many a vow
Breathed forth in happier days, are irksome now;
Denied that smile 'twas once my heaven to see,
Such scenes, such pleasures, are all past with me.

In vain He leaves me, I shall love him still;
And though I mourn, not murmur at his will;
I have no cause—an object all divine
Might well grow weary of a soul like mine;
Yet pity me, great God! forlorn, alone,
Heartless and hopeless, Life and Love all gone.

LOVE PURE AND FERVENT.

Jealous, and with love o'erflowing,
God demands a fervent heart;
Grace and bounty still bestowing,
Calls us to a grateful part.

Oh, then, with supreme affection
His paternal Will regard!
If it cost us some dejection,
Every sigh has its reward.

Perfect Love has power to soften
Cares that might our peace destroy;
Nay, does more—transforms them often,
Changing sorrow into joy.

Sovereign Love appoints the measure,
And the number of our pains;
And is pleased when we find pleasure
In the trials he ordains.

THE ENTIRE SURRENDER.

PEACE has unveil'd her smiling face,
And woos thy soul to her embrace,
Enjoy'd with ease, if thou refrain
From earthly love, else sought in vain;
She dwells with all who Truth prefer,
But seeks not them who seek not her.

Yield to the Lord, with simple heart,
All that thou hast, and all thou art;
Renounce all strength but strength divine,
And peace shall be for ever thine:
Behold the path which I have trod,
My path, till I go home to God.

THE PERFECT SACRIFICE.

I PLACE an offering at thy shrine,
From taint and blemish clear,
Simple and pure in its design,
Of all that I hold dear.

I yield thee back thy gifts again,
Thy gifts which most I prize;
Desirous only to retain
The notice of thine eyes.

But if, by thine adored decree,
That blessing be denied;
Resign'd and unreluctant, see
My every wish subside.

Thy will in all things I approve,
Exalted or cast down!
Thy will in every state I love,
And even in thy frown.

GOD HIDES HIS PEOPLE.

To lay the soul that loves him low,
Becomes the Only-wise:
To hide, beneath a veil of woe,
The children of the skies.

Man, though a worm, would yet be great;
Though feeble, would seem strong;
Assumes an independent state,
By sacrilege and wrong.

Strange the reverse, which, once abased,
The haughty creature proves!
He feels his soul a barren waste,
Nor dares affirm he loves.

Scorn'd by the thoughtless and the vain,
To God he presses near;
Superior to the world's disdain,
And happy in it's sneer.

Oh welcome, in his heart he says,
Humility and shame!
Farewell the wish for human praise,
The music of a name!

But will not scandal mar the good
That I might else perform?
And can God work it, if he would,
By so despised a worm?

Ah, vainly anxious!—leave the Lord
To rule thee, and dispose;
Sweet is the mandate of his word,
And gracious all He does.

He draws from human littleness
His grandeur and renown;
And generous hearts with joy confess
The triumph all his own.

Down then with self-exalting thoughts;
Thy faith and hope employ,
To welcome all that he allots,
And suffer shame with joy.

No longer, then, thou wilt encroach
On his eternal right;
And He shall smile at thy approach,
And make thee his delight.

THE

SECRETS OF DIVINE LOVE ARE TO BE KEPT.

SUN! stay thy course, this moment stay—
Suspend the o'erflowing tide of day,
Divulge not such a love as mine,
Ah! hide the mystery divine;
Lest man, who deems my glory shame,
Should learn the secret of my flame.

O Night! propitious to my views,
Thy sable awning wide diffuse;
Conceal alike my joy and pain,
Nor draw thy curtain back again,
Though Morning, by the tears she shows,
Seems to participate my woes.

Ye Stars! whose faint and feeble fires
Express my languishing desires,
Whose slender beams pervade the skies
As silent as my secret sighs,
Those emanations of a soul,
That darts her fires beyond the pole;

Your rays, that scarce assist the sight,
That pierce, but not displace the night,
That shine indeed, but nothing show
Of all those various scenes below,
Bring no disturbance, rather prove
Incentives to a sacred love.

Thou Moon! whose never failing course
Bespeaks a providential force,
Go, tell the tidings of my flame
To him who calls the stars by name,

Whose absence kills, whose presence cheers,
Who blots or brightens all my years.

While, in the blue abyss of space,
Thine orb performs its rapid race,
Still whisper in his listening ears
The language of my sighs and tears;
Tell him, I seek him, far below,
Lost in a wilderness of woe.

Ye thought-composing, silent Hours,
Diffusing peace o'er all my powers,
Friends of the pensive! who conceal
In darkest shades the flames I feel;
To you I trust, and safely may,
The love that wastes my strength away.

In sylvan scenes and caverns rude,
I taste the sweets of solitude;
Retired indeed, but not alone,
I share them with a Spouse unknown,
Who hides me here, from envious eyes,
From all intrusion and surprise.

Imbowering Shades, and Dens profound!
Where echo rolls the voice around;
Mountains! whose elevated heads,
A moist and misty veil o'erspreads;
Disclose a solitary bride
To him I love—to none beside.

Ye Rills! that, murmuring all the way,
Among the polish'd pebbles stray,
Creep silently along the ground,
Lest, drawn by that harmonious sound,

Some wanderer, whom I would not meet,
Should stumble on my loved retreat.

Enamel'd Meads, and Hillocks green,
And Streams that water all the scene!
Ye Torrents, loud in distant ears!
Ye Fountains, that receive my tears!
Ah! still conceal, with caution due,
A charge I trust with none but you.

If, when my pain and grief increase,
I seem to enjoy the sweetest peace,
It is because I find so fair
The charming object of my care,
That I can sport and pleasure make
Of torment suffer'd for his sake.

Ye Meads and Groves, unconscious things!
Ye know not whence my pleasure springs;
Ye know not, and ye cannot know,
The source from which my sorrows flow:
The dear sole Cause of all I feel,—
He knows, and understands them well.

Ye Deserts! where the wild beasts rove,
Scenes sacred to my hours of love;
Ye Forests! in whose shades I stray,
Benighted under burning day;
Ah! whisper not how blest am I,
Nor while I live, nor when I die.

Ye Lambs! who sport beneath these shades,
And bound along the mossy glades,
Be taught a salutary fear,
And cease to bleat when I am near:

The wolf may hear your harmless cry,
Whom ye should dread as much as I.

How calm, amid these scenes, my mind!
How perfect is the peace I find!
Oh hush, be still, my every part,
My tongue, my pulse, my beating heart!
That Love, aspiring to its cause,
May suffer not a moment's pause.

Ye swift-finn'd nations, that abide
In seas as fathomless as wide;
And unsuspicious of a snare,
Pursue at large your pleasures there:
Poor sportive fools! how soon does man
Your heedless ignorance trepan!

Away! dive deep into the brine,
Where never yet sunk plummet-line;
Trust me, the vast leviathan
Is merciful, compared with man;
Avoid his arts, forsake the beach,
And never play within his reach!

My soul her bondage ill endures;
I pant for liberty like yours;
I long for that immense profound,
That knows no bottom, and no bound;
Lost in infinity, to prove
The incomprehensible of Love.

Ye Birds! that lessen as ye fly,
And vanish in the distant sky;
To whom yon airy waste belongs,
Resounding with your cheerful songs;

Haste to escape from human sight!
Fear less the vulture and the kite.

How blest, and how secure am I,
When quitting earth, I soar on high;
When lost, like you I disappear,
And float in a sublimer sphere!
Whence, falling within human view,
I am ensnared, and caught like you.

Omniscient God, whose notice deigns
To try the heart and search the reins,
Compassionate the numerous woes,
I dare not, even to thee, disclose;
Oh save me from the cruel hands
Of men, who fear not thy commands!

Love, all-subduing and divine,
Care for a creature truly thine;
Reign in a heart, disposed to own
No sovereign but thyself alone;
Cherish a bride who cannot rove,
Nor quit Thee for a meaner love!

THE VICISSITUDES EXPERIENCED IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

I SUFFER fruitless anguish day by day,
Each moment, as it passes, marks my pain;
Scarce knowing whither, doubtfully I stray,
And see no end of all that I sustain.

The more I strive the more I am withstood;
Anxiety increasing every hour,
My spirit finds no rest, performs no good,
And nought remains of all my former power.

My peace of heart is fled, I know not where;
My happy hours, like shadows, pass'd away;
Their sweet remembrance doubles all my care,
Night darker seems, succeeding such a day.

Dear faded joys, and impotent regret,
What profit is there in incessant tears?
Oh Thou, whom once beheld, we ne'er forget,
Reveal thy Love, and banish all my fears!

Alas! He flies me—treats me as his foe,
Views not my sorrows, hears not when I plead;
Woe such as mine, despised, neglected woe,
Unless it shortens life, is vain indeed.

Pierced with a thousand wounds, I yet survive;
My pangs are keen, but no complaint transpires;
And while in terrors of thy wrath I live,
Hell seems to lose its less tremendous fires.

Has Hell a pain I would not gladly bear,
So thy severe displeasure might subside?
Hopeless of ease, I seem already there,
My life extinguish'd, and yet death denied.

Is this the joy so promised?—this the love,
The unchanging love, so sworn in better days?
Ah! dangerous glories! shown me, but to prove
How lovely Thou, and I how rash to gaze.

Why did I see them? had I still remain'd
Untaught, still ignorant how fair thou art,
My humbler wishes I had soon obtain'd,
Nor known the torments of a doubting heart.

Deprived of all, yet feeling no desires,
Whence then, I cry, the pangs that I sustain?
Dubious and uninform'd, my soul inquires,
Ought she to cherish, or shake off her pain?

Suffering, I suffer not; sincerely love,
Yet feel no touch of that enlivening flame;
As chance inclines me, unconcern'd I move,
All times, and all events, to me the same.

I search my heart, and not a wish is there,
But burns with zeal that hated self may fall;
Such is the sad disquietude I share,
A sea of doubts, and self the source of all.

I ask not life, nor do I wish to die;
And if thine hand accomplish not my cure,
I would not purchase with a single sigh,
A free discharge from all that I endure.

I groan in chains, yet want not a release;
Am sick, and know not the distemper'd part;
Am just as void of purpose as of peace;
Have neither plan, nor fear, nor hope, nor heart.

My claim to life, though sought with earnest care,
No light within me or without me shows;
Once I had faith, but now in self-despair
Find my chief cordial and my best repose.

My soul is a forgotten thing; she sinks,
Sinks and is lost without a wish to rise;
Feels an indifference she abhors, and thinks
Her name erased for ever from the skies.

Language affords not my distress a name,—
Yet is it real, and no sickly dream;
'Tis Love inflicts it; though to feel that flame
Is all I know of happiness supreme.

When Love departs, a chaos wide and vast,
And dark as Hell is open'd in the soul;
When Love returns, the gloomy scene is past,
No tempests shake her, and no fears controul.

Then tell me why these ages of delay?
Oh Love, all excellent, once more appear,
Disperse the shades, and snatch me into day,
From this abyss of night, these floods of fear!

No—Love is angry, will not now endure
A sigh of mine, or suffer a complaint;
He smites me, wounds me, and withholds the cure;
Exhausts my powers, and leaves me sick and faint.

He wounds, and hides the hand that gave the blow;
He flies, he reappears, and wounds again;—
Was ever heart that loved thee treated so?
Yet I adore thee, though it seem in vain.

And wilt thou leave me, whom, when lost and blind,
Thou didst distinguish and vouchsafe to choose,
Before thy laws were written in my mind,
While yet the world had all my thoughts and views?

Now leave me? when, enamour'd of thy laws,
I make thy glory my supreme delight;
Now blot me from thy register, and cause
A faithful soul to perish from thy sight?

What can have caused the change which I deplore?
Is it to prove me, if my heart be true?
Permit me then, while prostrate I adore,
To draw, and place it's picture in thy view.

'Tis thine without reserve, most simply thine;
So given to thee, that it is not my own;
A willing captive of thy grace divine;
And loves, and seeks thee, for Thyself alone.

Pain cannot move it, danger cannot scare;
Pleasure and wealth, in its esteem, are dust;
It loves thee, even when least inclined to spare
Its tenderest feelings, and avows thee just.

Tis all thine own; my spirit is so too,
An undivided offering at thy shrine;
It seeks thy glory with no double view,
Thy glory, with no secret bent to mine.

Love, holy Love! and art thou not severe,
To slight me, thus devoted and thus fix'd?
Mine is an everlasting ardour, clear
From all self-bias, generous and unmix'd.

But I am silent, seeing what I see,—
And fear, with cause, that I am self-deceived;
Not even my faith is from suspicion free,
And that I love, seems not to be believed.

Live Thou, and reign for ever, glorious Lord!
My last, least offering, I present thee now;—
Renounce me, leave me, and be still adored!
Slay me, my God, and I applaud the blow.

WATCHING UNTO GOD IN THE NIGHT SEASON.

SLEEP at last has fled these eyes,
Nor do I regret his flight,
More alert my spirits rise,
And my heart is free and light.

Nature silent all around,
Not a single witness near;
God as soon as sought is found,
And the flame of love burns clear.

Interruption, all day long,
Checks the current of my joys;
Creatures press me with a throng,
And perplex me with their noise.

Undisturb'd I muse all night,
On the first Eternal Fair;
Nothing there obstructs delight,
Love is renovated there.

Life, with its perpetual stir,
Proves a foe to Love and me;
Fresh entanglements occur,—
Comes the night, and sets me free.

Never more, sweet sleep, suspend
My enjoyments, always new:
Leave me to possess my friend;
Other eyes and hearts subdue.

Hush the world, that I may wake
To the taste of pure delights;
Oh the pleasures I partake,—
God the partner of my nights!

David, for the selfsame cause,
Night preferr'd to busy day:
Hearts whom heavenly beauty draws
Wish the glaring sun away.

Sleep, self-lovers is for you;—
Souls that love celestial know,
Fairer scenes by night can view
Than the sun could ever show.

ON THE SAME.

SEASON of my purest pleasure,
Sealer of observing eyes!
When, in larger, freer measure,
I can commune with the skies;
While, beneath thy shade extended,
Weary man forgets his woes;
I, my daily trouble ended,
Find, in watching, my repose.

Silence all around prevailing,
Nature hush'd in slumber sweet,
No rude noise mine ears assailing,
Now my God and I can meet:
Universal nature slumbers,
And my soul partakes the calm,
Breathes her ardour out in numbers,
Plaintive song or lofty psalm.

Now my passion, pure and holy,
Shines and burns without restraint,
Which the day's fatigue and folly
Cause to languish, dim and faint:
Charming hours of relaxation!
How I dread the ascending sun!
Surely, idle conversation
Is an evil, match'd by none.

Worldly prate and babble hurt me;
Unintelligible prove;
Neither teach me nor divert me;
I have ears for none but Love.
Me they rude esteem, and foolish,
Hearing my absurd replies;
I have neither art's fine polish,
Nor the knowledge of the wise.

Simple souls, and unpolluted
By conversing with the great,
Have a mind and taste ill suited
To their dignity and state;

All their talking, reading, writing,
Are but talents misapplied;
Infants' prattle I delight in,
Nothing human choose beside.

'Tis the secret fear of sinning
Checks my tongue, or I should say,
When I see the night beginning,
I am glad of parting day:
Love this gentle admonition
Whispers soft within my breast;
"Choice befits not thy condition,
Acquiescence suits thee best."

Henceforth, the repose and pleasure
Night affords me I resign;
And thy will shall be the measure,
Wisdom infinite! of mine:
Wishing is but Inclination
Quarreling with thy decrees;
Wayward nature finds the occasion,—
'Tis her folly and disease.

Night, with its sublime enjoyments,
Now no longer will I choose;
Nor the day, with its employments,
Irksome as they seem, refuse;
Lessons of a God's inspiring
Neither time nor place impedes;
From our wishing and desiring
Our unhappiness proceeds.

ON THE SAME.

NIGHT! how I love thy silent shades,
My spirits they compose;
The bliss of heaven my soul pervades,
In spite of all my woes.

While sleep instils her poppy dews
In every slumbering eye,
I watch, to meditate and muse,
In blest tranquillity.

And when I feel a God immense
Familiarly impart,
With every proof he can dispense,
His favour to my heart;

My native meanness I lament,
Though most divinely fill'd
With all the ineffable content
That Deity can yield.

His purpose and his course he keeps;
Treads all my reasonings down;
Commands me out of nature's deeps,
And hides me in his own.

When in the dust, its proper place,
Our pride of heart we lay,
'Tis then a deluge of his grace
Bears all our sins away.

Thou whom I serve, and whose I am,
Whose influence from on high
Refines, and still refines my flame,
And makes my fetters fly;

How wretched is the creature's state
Who thwarts thy gracious power;
Crush'd under sin's enormous weight,
Increasing every hour!

The night, when pass'd entire with thee,
How luminous and clear!
Then sleep has no delights for me,
Lest thou shouldst disappear.

My Saviour! occupy me still
In this secure recess;
Let Reason slumber if she will,
My joy shall not be less:

Let Reason slumber out the night;
But if thou deign to make
My soul the abode of Truth and Light,
Ah, keep my heart awake!

THE JOY OF THE CROSS.

Long plunged in sorrow, I resign
My soul to that dear hand of thine,
Without reserve or fear;
That hand shall wipe my streaming eyes,
Or into smiles of glad surprise
Transform the falling tear.

My sole possession is thy love;
In earth beneath, or heaven above,
I have no other store;
And though with fervent suit I pray,
And importune thee night and day,
I ask thee nothing more.

My rapid hours pursue the course
Prescribed them by love's sweetest force;
And I thy sovereign will,
Without a wish to escape my doom,
Though still a sufferer from the womb,
And doom'd to suffer still.

By thy command, where'er I stray,
Sorrow attends me all my way,
A never failing friend;
And if my sufferings may augment
Thy praise, behold me well content,—
Let Sorrow still attend!

It costs me no regret, that she,
Who follow'd Christ, should follow me;
And though, where'er she goes,
Thorns spring spontaneous at her feet,
I love her, and extract a sweet
From all my bitter woes.

Adieu! ye vain delights of earth;
Insipid sports, and childish mirth,
I taste no sweets in you;
Unknown delights are in the Cross,
All joy beside to me is dross;
And Jesus thought so too.

The Cross! Oh ravishment and bliss,—
How grateful even its anguish is,
  Its bitterness how sweet!
There every sense, and all the mind,
In all her faculties refined,
  Tastes happiness complete.

Souls once enabled to disdain
Base sublunary joys, maintain
  Their dignity secure;
The fever of desire is pass'd,
And love has all its genuine taste,
  Is delicate and pure.

Self-love no grace in sorrow sees,
Consults her own peculiar ease;
  'Tis all the bliss she knows:
But nobler aims true Love employ;
In self-denial is her joy,
  In suffering her repose.

Sorrow and Love go side by side;
Nor height nor depth can e'er divide
  Their heaven-appointed bands;
Those dear associates still are one,
Nor till the race of life is run
  Disjoin their wedded hands.

Jesus, avenger of our fall,
Thou faithful lover, above all
  The Cross has ever borne!
Oh tell me,—life is in thy voice,—
How much afflictions were thy choice,
  And sloth and ease thy scorn!

Thy choice and mine shall be the same,
Inspirer of that holy flame
  Which must for ever blaze!
To take the Cross and follow thee,
Where love and duty lead, shall be
  My portion and my praise.

JOY IN MARTYRDOM.

Sweet tenants of this grove,
  Who sing, without design,
A song of artless love,
  In unison with mine:
These echoing shades return
  Full many a note of ours,
That wise ones cannot learn
  With all their boasted powers.

O Thou! whose sacred charms
  These hearts so seldom love,
Although thy beauty warms
  And blesses all above;
How slow are human things
  To choose their happiest lot!
All-glorious King of kings,
  Say why we love thee not?

This heart, that cannot rest,
  Shall thine for ever prove;
Though bleeding and distress'd,
  Yet joyful in thy love:

'Tis happy, though it breaks
  Beneath thy chastening hand;
And speechless,—yet it speaks
  What thou canst understand.

SIMPLE TRUST.

STILL, still, without ceasing,
  I feel it increasing,
This fervour of holy desire;
  And often exclaim,
  Let me die in the flame
Of a love that can never expire!

  Had I words to explain
  What she must sustain
Who dies to the world and its ways:
  How joy and affright,
  Distress and delight,
Alternately chequer her days.

  Thou, sweetly severe!
  I would make thee appear,
In all thou art pleased to award,
  Not more in the sweet
  Than the bitter I meet,
My tender and merciful Lord.

  This Faith, in the dark
  Pursuing its mark
Through many sharp trials of Love,
  Is the sorrowful waste
  That is to be pass'd
In the way to the Canaan above.

THE NECESSITY OF SELF-ABASEMENT.

SOURCE of love, my brighter sun,
Thou alone my comfort art;
See, my race is almost run;
Hast thou left this trembling heart?

In my youth thy charming eyes
Drew me from the ways of men;
Then I drank unmingled joys;
Frown of thine saw never then.

Spouse of Christ was then my name;
And devoted all to thee,
Strangely jealous, I became
Jealous of this Self in me.

Thee to love, and none beside,
Was my darling, sole employ;
While alternately I died,
Now of grief, and now of joy.

Through the dark and silent night
On thy radiant smiles I dwelt;
And to see the dawning light
Was the keenest pain I felt.

Thou my gracious teacher wert;
And thine eye, so close applied,
While it watch'd thy pupil's heart,
Seem'd to look at none beside.

Conscious of no evil drift,
  This, I cried, is Love indeed!—
'Tis the Giver, not the Gift,
  Whence the joys I feel proceed.

But soon humbled, and laid low,
  Stript of all thou hast conferr'd,
Nothing left but sin and woe,
  I perceived how I had err'd.

Oh the vain conceit of man,
  Dreaming of a good his own,
Arrogating all he can,
  Though the Lord is good alone!

He the graces thou hast wrought
  Makes subservient to his pride;
Ignorant, that one such thought
  Passes all his sin beside.

Such his folly,—proved, at last,
  By the loss of that repose
Self-complacence cannot taste,
  Only Love Divine bestows.

'Tis by this reproof severe,
  And by this reproof alone,
His defects at last appear,
  Man is to himself made known.

Learn, all Earth! that feeble man,
  Sprung from this terrestrial clod,
Nothing is, and nothing can;
  Life and power are all in God.

LOVE INCREASED BY SUFFERING.

"I LOVE the Lord," is still the strain
  This heart delights to sing;
But I reply,—your thoughts are vain,
  Perhaps 'tis no such thing.

Before the power of Love Divine
  Creation fades away;
Till only God is seen to shine
  In all that we survey.

In gulfs of aweful night we find
  The God of our desires;
'Tis there he stamps the yielding mind,
  And doubles all its fires.

Flames of encircling love invest,
  And pierce it sweetly through;
'Tis fill'd with sacred joy, yet press'd
  With sacred sorrow too.

Ah Love! my heart is in the right—
  Amidst a thousand woes,
To thee, it's ever new delight,
  And all its peace it owes.

Fresh causes of distress occur
  Where'er I look or move;
The comforts I to all prefer
  Are solitude and love.

Nor exile I, nor prison fear;
Love makes my courage great;
I find a Saviour every where,
His grace in every state.

Nor castle walls, nor dungeons deep,
Exclude his quickening beams;
There I can sit, and sing, and weep,
And dwell on heavenly themes.

There sorrow, for his sake, is found
A joy beyond compare;
There no presumptuous thoughts abound,
No pride can enter there.

A Saviour doubles all my joys,
And sweetens all my pains,
His strength in my defence employs,
Consoles me and sustains.

I fear no ill, resent no wrong,
Nor feel a passion move,
When malice whets her slanderous tongue;
Such patience is in love.

SCENES FAVOURABLE TO MEDITATION.

Wilds horrid and dark with o'ershadowing trees,
Rocks that ivy and briers infold,
Scenes nature with dread and astonishment sees,
But I with a pleasure untold;

Though awefully silent, and shaggy, and rude,
I am charm'd with the peace ye afford,
Your shades are a temple where none will intrude,
The abode of my Lover and Lord.

I am sick of thy splendour, O Fountain of day,
And here I am hid from its beams;
Here safely contemplate a brighter display
Of the noblest and holiest of themes.

Ye Forests, that yield me my sweetest repose,
Where stillness and solitude reign,
To you I securely and boldly disclose
The dear anguish of which I complain.

Here, sweetly forgetting and wholly forgot
By the world and its turbulent throng,
The birds and the streams lend me many a note
That aids meditation and song.

Here, wandering in scenes that are sacred to night,
Love wears me and wastes me away;
And often the sun has spent much of his light
Ere yet I perceive it is day.

While a mantle of darkness envelopes the sphere,
My sorrows are sadly rehearsed;
To me the dark hours are all equally dear,
And the last is as sweet as the first.

Here I and the beasts of the deserts agree;
Mankind are the wolves that I fear,
They grudge me my natural right to be free,
But nobody questions it here.

Though little is found in this dreary abode
That appetite wishes to find,
My spirit is soothed by the presence of God,
And appetite wholly resign'd.

Ye desolate scenes, to your solitude led,
My life I in praises employ,
And scarce know the source of the tears that I shed,
Proceed they from sorrow or joy.

There's nothing I seem to have skill to discern;
I feel out my way in the dark,
Love reigns in my bosom, I constantly burn,
Yet hardly distinguish the spark.

I live, yet I seem to myself to be dead;
Such a riddle is not to be found;
I am nourish'd without knowing how I am fed,
I have nothing, and yet I abound.

Oh Love! who in darkness art pleased to abide
Though dimly, yet surely I see
That these contrarieties only reside
In the soul that is chosen of thee.

Ah send me not back to the race of mankind,
Perversely by folly beguiled,
For where, in the crowds I have left, shall I find
The spirit and heart of a child?

Here let me, though fix'd in a desert, be free;
A little one whom they despise,
Though lost to the world, if in union with Thee,
Shall be holy and happy and wise.

THE TASK.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE history of the following production is briefly this. A lady, fond of blank verse, demanded a poem of that kind from the author, and gave him the Sofa for a subject. He obeyed; and having much leisure, connected another subject with it; and pursuing the train of thought to which his situation and turn of mind led him, brought forth at length, instead of the trifle which he at first intended, a serious affair,—a Volume.

In the poem on the subject of Education he would be very sorry to stand suspected of having aimed his censure at any particular school. His objections are such as naturally apply themselves to schools in general. If there were not, as for the most part there is, wilful neglect in those who manage them, and an omission even of such discipline as they are susceptible of, the objects are yet too numerous for minute attention; and the aching hearts of ten thousand parents, mourning under the bitterest of all disappointments, attest the truth of the allegation. His quarrel therefore is with the mischief at large, and not with any particular instance of it.

ARGUMENT OF THE FIRST BOOK.

Historical deduction of seats, from the stool to the Sofa. A schoolboy's ramble. A walk in the country. The scene described. Rural sounds as well as sights delightful. Another walk. Mistake concerning the charms of solitude corrected. Colonnades commended. Alcove, and the view from it. The Wilderness. The Grove. The Thresher. The necessity and the benefits of exercise. The works of nature superior to and in some instances inimitable by art. The wearisomeness of what is commonly called a life of pleasure. Change of scene sometimes expedient. A common described, and the character of crazy Kate introduced upon it. Gipsies. The blessings of civilized life. That state most favourable to virtue. The South Sea islanders compassionated, but chiefly Omai. His present state of mind supposed. Civilized life friendly to virtue, but not great cities. Great cities, and London in particular, allowed their due praise, but censured. *Fête champêtre.* The book concludes with a reflection on the fatal effects of dissipation and effeminacy upon our public measures.

THE TASK.

BOOK I.

THE SOFA.

I SING the Sofa. I who lately[1] sang
Truth, Hope, and Charity, and touch'd with awe
The solemn chords, and with a trembling hand,
Escaped[2] with pain from that adventurous flight,
Now seek repose upon an humbler theme;
The theme though humble, yet august and proud
The occasion,—for the Fair commands the song.

Time was when clothing, sumptuous or for use,
Save[3] their own painted skins, our sires had none.

[1] I who erewhile the happy garden sung
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing, &c.
Paradise Regained, i. 1.

I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song.
Paradise Lost, i. 13.

[2] Thee I revisit now with bolder wing,
Escaped the Stygian pool. *Par. Lost*, iii. 13.

[3] A painted vest Prince Vortiger had on,
Which from a naked Pict his grandsire won.
Howard's British Princes.

Yet in another of his poems Cowper says—
Taught thee to clothe thy pink'd and painted hide.
Expostulation.

As yet[4] black breeches were not, sattin smooth,
Or velvet soft, or plush with shaggy pile.
The hardy chief upon the rugged rock
Wash'd by the sea, or on the gravelly bank
Thrown up by wintry torrents roaring loud,
Fearless of wrong, reposed his weary strength.
Those barbarous ages past, succeeded next
The birthday of invention, weak at first,
Dull in design, and clumsy to perform.
Joint-stools were then created; on three legs
Upborne they stood,—three legs upholding firm
A massy slab, in fashion square or round.
On such a stool immortal Alfred sat,
And sway'd the sceptre of his infant realms;
And such in ancient halls and mansions drear
May still be seen, but perforated sore
And drill'd in holes the solid oak is found,
By worms voracious eating through and through.
  At length a generation more refined
Improved the simple plan, made three legs four,
Gave them a twisted form vermicular,
And o'er the seat with plenteous wadding stuff'd
Induced a splendid cover green and blue,
Yellow and red, of tapestry richly wrought
And woven close, or needle-work sublime.
There might ye see the piony spread wide,
The full-blown rose, the shepherd and his lass,
Lap-dog and lambkin with black staring eyes,
And parrots with twin cherries in their beak.
  Now came the cane from India, smooth and bright
With Nature's varnish; sever'd into stripes

[4] As yet this world was not. *Par. Lost*, v. 577.

That interlaced each other, these supplied
Of texture firm a lattice-work, that braced
The new machine, and it became a chair.
But restless was the chair; the back erect
Distress'd the weary loins that felt no ease;
The slippery seat betray'd the sliding part
That press'd it, and the feet hung dangling down,
Anxious in vain to find the distant floor.
These for the rich: the rest, whom fate had placed
In modest mediocrity, content
With base materials, sat on well-tann'd hides
Obdurate and unyielding, glassy smooth,
With here and there a tuft of crimson yarn,
Or scarlet crewel in the cushion fixt:
If cushion[5] might be call'd, what harder seem'd
Than the firm oak of which the frame was form'd.
No want of timber then was felt or fear'd
In Albion's happy isle. The lumber stood
Ponderous[6], and fixt by its own massy weight.
But elbows still were wanting; these, some say,
An Alderman of Cripplegate contrived,
And some ascribe the invention to a priest
Burly and big and studious of his ease.
But rude at first, and not with easy slope
Receding wide, they press'd against the ribs,
And bruised the side, and elevated high

[5] The other shape,
If shape it might be call'd, that shape had none.
Par. Lost, iii. 666.

[6] The arch'd and ponderous roof; by its own weight
Made steadfast and immoveable.
Congreve. Mourning Bride.

Taught the raised shoulders to invade the ears.
Long time elapsed or ere our rugged sires
Complain'd, though incommodiously pent in,
And ill at ease behind. The ladies first
'Gan[7] murmur, as became the softer sex.
Ingenious fancy, never better pleased
Than when employ'd to accommodate the fair,
Heard the sweet moan with pity, and devised
The soft settee; one elbow at each end,
And in the midst an elbow, it received
United yet divided, twain at once.
So sit two Kings of Brentford on one throne;
And so two citizens who take the air
Close pack'd and smiling in a chaise and one.
But relaxation of the languid frame
By soft recumbency of outstretch'd limbs,
Was bliss reserved for happier days;—so slow
The growth of what is excellent, so hard
To attain perfection in this nether world.
Thus first necessity invented stools,
Convenience next suggested elbow chairs,
And luxury the accomplished SOFA last.
The nurse sleeps sweetly, hired to watch the sick
Whom snoring she disturbs. As sweetly he
Who quits the coach-box at the midnight hour
To sleep within the carriage more secure,
His legs depending at the open door.
Sweet sleep enjoys the Curate in his desk,
The tedious Rector drawling o'er his head,
And sweet the Clerk below: but neither sleep

[7] 'Gan thunder. Either tropic now *Par. Reg.* iv. 410.

Of lazy nurse, who snores the sick man dead,
Nor his who quits the box at midnight hour
To slumber in the carriage more secure,
Nor sleep enjoy'd by Curate in his desk,
Nor yet the dozings of the Clerk are sweet,
Compared with the repose the SOFA yields[8].
Oh may I live exempted (while I live
Guiltless of pamper'd appetite obscene,)
From pangs arthritic that infest the toe
Of libertine excess. The SOFA suits
The gouty limb, 'tis true; but gouty limb,
Though on a SOFA, may I never feel:
For I have loved the rural walk through lanes

[8] Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet
With charm of earliest birds, &c.
But neither breath of morn when she ascends
With charm of earliest birds, &c.
Par. Lost, iv. 641—656.

Milton has another of these replicatory passages at the end of Book x.:—

What better can we do than to the place
Repairing where he judged us, prostrate fall, &c.
They forthwith to the place
Repairing where he judged them, prostrate fell, &c.

Another in Comus, line 222:—

Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night?
I did not err, there does a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night.

Orlando. If ever you have look'd on better days;
If ever been where bells have knoll'd to church.
Duke. True is it that we have seen better days;
And have with holy bell been knoll'd to church, &c.
As You Like It, Act ii. Sc. 7.

Of grassy swarth close cropt by nibbling[9] sheep,
And skirted thick with intertexture firm
Of thorny boughs; have loved the rural walk
O'er hills, through valleys, and by river's brink,
E'er since a truant boy I pass'd my bounds
To enjoy a ramble on the banks of Thames.
And still remember, nor without regret
Of hours that sorrow since has much endear'd,
How oft, my slice of pocket store consumed,
Still hungering pennyless and far from home,
I fed on scarlet hips and stony haws,
Or blushing crabs, or berries that emboss
The bramble, black as jet, or sloes austere.
Hard fare! but such as boyish appetite
Disdains not, nor the palate undepraved
By culinary arts unsavoury deems.
No SOFA then awaited my return,
Nor SOFA then I needed. Youth repairs
His wasted spirits quickly, by long toil
Incurring short fatigue; and though our years
As life declines, speed rapidly away,
And[10] not a year but pilfers as he goes
Some youthful grace that age would gladly keep,
A tooth or auburn lock, and by degrees

[9] Where the nibbling flocks do stray. *L'Allegro.*

[10] Years following years steal something every day.
Pope. Imit. of Hor. Ep. ii. 2.

(Singula de nobis anni prædantur euntes.)

Not numerous are our joys when life is new,
And yearly some are falling of the few.
Young. Sat. v.

Their length and colour from the locks they spare;
The elastic spring of an unwearied foot
That mounts the stile with ease, or leaps the fence,
That play of lungs inhaling and again
Respiring freely the fresh air, that makes
Swift pace or steep ascent no toil to me,
Mine have not pilfer'd yet; nor yet impair'd
My relish of fair prospect; scenes that soothed
Or charm'd me young, no longer young, I find
Still soothing and of power to charm me still.
And witness, dear companion of my walks,
Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive
Fast lock'd in mine, with pleasure such as love
Confirm'd by long experience of thy worth
And well-tried virtues could alone inspire,—
Witness a joy that thou hast doubled long.
Thou knowest my praise of nature most sincere,
And that my raptures are not conjured up
To serve occasions of poetic pomp,
But genuine, and art partner of them all.
How oft upon yon eminence our pace
Has slacken'd to a pause, and we have borne
The ruffling wind scarce conscious that it blew,
While admiration feeding at the eye,
And still unsated, dwelt upon the scene.
Thence with what pleasure have we just discern'd
The distant plough slow-moving, and beside
His labouring team, that swerved not from the track,
The sturdy swain diminish'd to a boy[11]!

[11] Yon tall anchoring bark
Diminished to her cock, her cock a buoy
Almost too small for sight.
King Lear, Act iv. Sc. 6.

Here Ouse, slow winding through a level plain
Of spacious meads with cattle sprinkled o'er,
Conducts the eye along his sinuous [12] course
Delighted. There, fast rooted in his bank
Stand, never overlook'd, our favourite elms
That screen the herdsman's solitary hut;
While far beyond and overthwart the stream
That as with molten glass inlays the vale,
The sloping land recedes into the clouds;
Displaying on its varied side the grace
Of hedge-row beauties numberless, square tower,
Tall spire, from which the sound of cheerful bells
Just undulates upon the listening ear;
Groves, heaths, and smoking villages remote.
Scenes must be beautiful which daily view'd
Please daily [13], and whose novelty survives
Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years.
Praise justly due to those that I describe.

Nor rural sights alone, but rural sounds
Exhilarate the spirit [14], and restore
The tone of languid Nature. Mighty winds
That sweep the skirt of some far-spreading wood
Of ancient growth, make music not unlike
The dash of ocean on his winding shore,
And lull the spirit while they fill the mind,

[12] Striking the ground with sinuous trace.
Par. Lost, vii. 481.

[13] *Hæc placuit semel, et decies repetita placebit.* Hor.

[14] Sustain, Thou only canst, the sick of heart,
Restore their languid spirits, and recall
Their lost affections unto thee and thine.
Excursion, p. 142.

Unnumber'd branches waving in the blast,
And all their leaves fast fluttering, all at once.
Nor less composure waits upon the roar
Of distant floods, or on the softer voice
Of neighbouring fountain, or of rills that slip
Through the cleft rock, and chiming as they fall
Upon loose pebbles, lose themselves at length
In matted grass, that with a livelier green
Betrays the secret of their silent course [15].
Nature inanimate employs sweet sounds,
But animated Nature sweeter still
To soothe and satisfy the human ear.
Ten thousand warblers cheer the day [16], and one
The livelong night: nor these alone whose notes
Nice-finger'd art must emulate in vain,
But cawing rooks, and kites that swim sublime
In still repeated circles, screaming loud,
The jay, the pie, and even the boding owl
That hails the rising moon, have charms for me.
Sounds inharmonious in themselves and harsh,
Yet heard in scenes where peace for ever reigns,
And only there, please highly for their sake.
Peace to the artist, whose ingenious thought
Devised the weather-house, that useful toy!
Fearless of humid air and gathering rains
Forth steps the man, an emblem of myself;

[15] By their onward lapse
Betray to sight the motion of the stream
Else imperceptible. *Excursion*, p. 139.

[16] To their nests
Were slunk all but the wakeful nightingale.
Par. Lost, iv. 601.

More delicate his timorous mate retires.
When Winter soaks the fields, and female feet
Too weak to struggle with tenacious clay,
Or ford the rivulets, are best at home,
The task of new discoveries falls on me.
At such a season and with such a charge
Once went I forth, and found, till then unknown,
A cottage, whither oft we since repair:
'Tis perch'd upon the green-hill top, but close
Environ'd with a ring of branching elms
That overhang the thatch, itself unseen,
Peeps at the vale below; so thick beset
With foliage of such dark redundant growth,
I call'd the low-roof'd lodge the *peasant's nest.*
And hidden as it is, and far remote
From such unpleasing sounds as haunt the ear
In village or in town, the bay of curs
Incessant, clinking hammers, grinding wheels,
And infants clamorous whether pleased or pain'd,
Oft have I wish'd the peaceful covert mine.
Here, I have said, at least I should possess
The poet's treasure [17], silence, and indulge
The dreams of fancy, tranquil and secure.
Vain thought! the dweller in that still retreat
Dearly obtains the refuge it affords.
Its elevated site forbids the wretch
To drink sweet waters of the crystal well;

[17] Run,
To ease and silence every Muse's son.
Pope. Hor. ii. 2.

Silence is the rest of the soul, and refreshes invention.
Lord Bacon.

He dips his bowl into the weedy ditch,
And heavy-laden brings his beverage home,
Far-fetch'd and little worth; nor seldom waits,
Dependent on the baker's punctual call,
To hear his creaking panniers at the door,
Angry and sad, and his last crust consumed.
So farewell envy of the *peasant's nest.*
If solitude make scant the means of life,
Society for me! Thou seeming sweet,
Be still a pleasing object in my view,
My visit still, but never mine abode.

Not distant far, a length of colonnade
Invites us: Monument of ancient taste,
Now scorn'd, but worthy of a better fate.
Our fathers knew the value of a screen
From sultry suns, and in their shaded walks
And long-protracted bowers, enjoy'd at noon [18]
The gloom and coolness of declining day.
We bear our shades about us; self-deprived
Of other screen, the thin umbrella spread,
And range an Indian waste without a tree.
Thanks to Benevolus [19]; he spares me yet
These chestnuts ranged in corresponding lines,
And though himself so polish'd, still reprieves
The obsolete prolixity of shade.

Descending now (but cautious, lest too fast,)
A sudden steep, upon a rustic bridge

[18] Where summer's beauty midst of winter stays,
And winter's coolness spite of summer's rays.
Pope. Imit. of Cowley.

[19] John Courtney Throckmorton, Esq. of Weston Underwood.

We pass a gulf in which the willows[20] dip
Their pendent boughs, stooping as if to drink.
Hence ancle-deep in moss and flowery thyme
We mount again, and feel at every step
Our foot half sunk in hillocks green and soft,
Raised by the mole, the miner of the soil.
He not unlike the great ones of mankind,
Disfigures earth, and plotting in the dark
Toils much to earn a monumental pile,
That may record the mischiefs he has done.
The summit gain'd, behold the proud alcove
That crowns it! yet not all its pride secures
The grand retreat from injuries impress'd
By rural carvers, who with knives deface
The panels, leaving an obscure rude name[21]
In characters uncouth, and spelt amiss.
So strong the zeal to immortalize himself
Beats in the breast of man, that even a few
Few transient years won from the abyss abhorr'd
Of blank oblivion[22], seem a glorious prize,
And even to a clown. Now roves the eye,
And posted on this speculative height
Exults in its command. The sheep-fold here
Pours out its fleecy tenants o'er the glebe.
At first, progressive as a stream, they seek
The middle field; but scatter'd by degrees

[20] ——— A willow grows ascant the brook
There on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
Clambering to hang. *Hamlet*, Act iv. Sc. 7.

[21] Their name, their years, spelt by the unletter'd Muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply. *Gray.*

[22] For who to dumb forgetfulness a prey—

Each to his choice, soon whiten all the land.
There, from the sun-burnt hay-field homeward creeps
The loaded wain, while lighten'd of its charge
The wain that meets it passes swiftly by,
The boorish driver leaning o'er his team
Vociferous, and impatient of delay.
Nor less attractive is the woodland scene,
Diversified with trees of every growth
Alike yet various. Here the grey smooth trunks
Of ash, or lime, or beech, distinctly shine,
Within the twilight of their distant shades;
There lost behind a rising ground, the wood
Seems sunk, and shorten'd to its topmost boughs.
No tree in all the grove but has its charms,
Though each its hue peculiar; paler some,
And of a wannish grey; the willow such
And poplar[23], that with silver lines his leaf,
And ash far-stretching his umbrageous arm;
Of deeper green the elm; and deeper still,
Lord of the woods, the long-surviving oak.
Some glossy-leaved and shining in the sun,
The maple, and the beech of oily nuts
Prolific, and the lime at dewy eve[24]
Diffusing odours: nor unnoted pass
The sycamore, capricious in attire,
Now green, now tawny, and ere autumn yet

[23] From haunted spring, and dale
Edged with poplar pale.
Milton. Hymn 184.

[24] From morn
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve.
Par. Lost, i. 742.

Have changed the woods, in scarlet honours bright.
O'er these, but far beyond, (a spacious map
Of hill and valley interposed between,)
The Ouse, dividing the well-water'd land,
Now glitters in the sun, and now retires,
As bashful, yet impatient to be seen.
  Hence the declivity is sharp and short,
And such the re-ascent; between them weeps
A little Naiad her impoverish'd urn
All summer long, which winter fills again.
The folded gates would bar my progress now,
But that the Lord[25] of this enclosed demesne,
Communicative of the good he owns,
Admits me to a share: the guiltless eye
Commits no wrong, nor wastes what it enjoys.
Refreshing change! where now the blazing sun?
By short transition we have lost his glare,
And stepp'd at once into a cooler clime.
Ye fallen avenues! once more I mourn
Your fate unmerited, once more rejoice
That yet a remnant of your race survives.
How airy and how light the graceful arch,
Yet aweful as the consecrated roof[26]

[25] See the foregoing note (19).

[26] Accordant with the theory commonly ascribed to Bishop Warburton, but which may be found in older Stukeley—

"The cloysters in this Cathedral (at Gloucester) are beautiful beyond any thing I ever saw, . . . for a gallery, library, or the like, it is the best manner of building, because the idea of it is taken from a walk of trees, whose branching heads are curiously imitated by the roof."—*Itinerarium Curiosum*, p. 68.

Why should we crave a hallowed spot?
An altar is in each man's cot,

Reechoing pious anthems! while beneath
The chequer'd earth seems restless as a flood
Brush'd by the wind. So sportive is the light
Shot through the boughs, it dances as they dance,
Shadow and sunshine intermingling quick,
And darkening and enlightening, as the leaves
Play wanton, every moment, every spot.
And now with nerves new-braced and spirits cheer'd
We tread the wilderness, whose well-roll'd walks
With curvature of slow and easy sweep,—
Deception innocent,—give ample space
To narrow bounds. The grove receives us next;
Between the upright shafts of whose tall elms
We may discern the thresher at his task.
Thump after thump, resounds the constant flail,
That seems to swing uncertain, and yet falls
Full on the destined ear. Wide flies the chaff,
The rustling straw sends up a frequent mist
Of atoms sparkling in the noon-day beam.
Come hither, ye that press your beds of down
And sleep not,—see him sweating o'er his bread
Before he eats it.—'Tis the primal[27] curse,

A church in every grove that spreads
Its living roof above our heads.
Wordsworth. Labourer's Hymns.

Here aged trees Cathedral walks compose.
Pope. Imit. of Cowley.

This line may have given the hint to Warburton.

[27] O, my offence is rank, it smells to Heaven,
It hath the primal eldest curse upon it.
Hamlet, Act iii. Sc. 3.

On me the curse aslope

But soften'd into mercy; made the pledge
Of cheerful days, and nights without a groan.
By ceaseless action, all that is subsists.
Constant rotation of the unwearied wheel
That nature rides upon, maintains her health,
Her beauty, her fertility. She dreads
An instant's pause, and lives but while she moves.
Its own revolvency upholds the world.
Winds from all quarters agitate the air,
And fit the limpid element for use,
Else noxious: oceans, rivers, lakes, and streams
All feel the freshening impulse, and are cleansed
By restless undulation. Even the oak
Thrives by the rude concussion of the storm;
He seems indeed indignant, and to feel
The impression of the blast with proud disdain,
Frowning as if in his unconscious arm
He held the thunder. But the monarch owes
His firm stability to what he scorns,
More fixt below, the more disturb'd above.
The law by which all creatures else are bound,
Binds man the lord of all. Himself derives
No mean advantage from a kindred cause,

Glanced on the ground, with labour I must earn
My bread—What harm? idleness had been worse.
Par. Lost, x. 1053.

It polishes anew
By that collision all the fine machine:
Else rust would rise, and foulness by degrees
Incumbering, choke at last what Heaven design'd
For ceaseless motion and a round of toil.
Akenside. Pleasures of Imagination, ii. 161.

From strenuous toil his hours of sweetest ease.
The sedentary stretch their lazy length
When custom bids, but no refreshment find,
For none they need: the languid eye, the cheek
Deserted of its bloom, the flaccid, shrunk,
And wither'd muscle, and the vapid soul,
Reproach their owner with that love of rest
To which he forfeits even the rest he loves[28].
Not such the alert and active. Measure life
By its true worth, the comforts it affords,
And theirs alone seems worthy of the name.
Good health, and its associate in the most,
Good temper; spirits prompt to undertake,
And not soon spent, though in an arduous task;
The powers of fancy and strong thought are theirs;
Even age itself seems privileged in them
With clear exemption from its own defects.
A sparkling eye beneath a wrinkled front
The veteran shows, and gracing a grey beard
With youthful smiles, descends towards the grave
Sprightly, and old almost without decay.
Like a coy maiden, ease, when courted most,
Farthest retires,—an idol, at whose shrine
Who oftenest sacrifice are favour'd least.

[28] She marked thee there
Stretch'd on the rack of a too easy chair,
And heard thy everlasting yawn confess
The pains and penalties of idleness.
Dunciad, iv. 341.

With anxious care they labour to be glad,
What bodily fatigue is half so bad?
Young. Sat. v.

The love of Nature, and the scenes she draws
Is Nature's dictate. Strange! there should be found
Who self-imprison'd in their proud saloons,
Renounce the odours of the open field
For the unscented fictions of the loom;
Who satisfied with only pencil'd scenes,
Prefer to the performance of a God
The inferior wonders of an artist's hand.
Lovely indeed the mimic works of art,
But Nature's works far lovelier. I admire—
None more admires the painter's magic skill,
Who shows me that which I shall never see[29],
Conveys a distant country into mine,
And throws Italian light on English walls.
But imitative strokes can do no more
Than please the eye, sweet Nature every sense[30].
The air salubrious of her lofty hills,
The cheering fragrance of her dewy vales
And music of her woods,—no works of man
May rival these; these all bespeak a power

[29] Who *shows* me that which I shall *never see*.

A liberty of expression justified by high authority—

So hand in hand they pass'd, the loveliest pair
That ever since in love's embraces met,
Adam the goodliest man of men since born
His sons, the fairest of her daughters Eve.
Par. Lost, iv. 321.

In the lowest deep a lower deep. *Ibid.* iv. 76.

Et ambigua de Vespasiano fama: solusque omnium ante se Principum, in melius mutatus est.—Tacitus Hist. i. 50.

[30] For eloquence the soul, song charms the sense.
Par. Lost, ii. 556.

Peculiar, and exclusively her own.
Beneath the open sky she spreads the feast;
'Tis free to all,—'tis every day renew'd,
Who scorns it, starves deservedly at home.
He does not scorn it, who imprison'd long[31]
In some unwholesome dungeon, and a prey
To sallow sickness, which the vapours dank
And clammy of his dark abode have bred,
Escapes at last to liberty and light.
His cheek recovers soon its healthful hue,
His eye relumines its extinguish'd fires,
He walks, he leaps, he runs,—is wing'd with joy,
And riots in the sweets of every breeze.
He does not scorn it, who has long endured
A fever's agonies, and fed on drugs.
Nor yet the mariner[32], his blood inflamed

[31] Fair the face of spring,
To every eye; but how much more to his
Round whom the bed of sickness long diffused
Its melancholy gloom! how doubly fair
When first with fresh-born vigour he inhales
The balmy breeze, and feels the blessed sun
Warm at his bosom, from the springs of life
Chasing oppressive damps and languid pain.
Akenside. Pleasures of Imagination, ii. 88.

[32] So by a calenture misled
The mariner with rapture sees
On the smooth ocean's azure bed
Enamel'd fields and verdant trees;
With eager haste he longs to rove
In that fantastic scene, and thinks
It must be some enchanted grove,—
And in he leaps and down he sinks.
Swift. South Sea. 1721.

With acrid salts; his very heart athirst
To gaze at Nature in her green array.
Upon the ship's tall side he stands, possess'd
With visions prompted by intense desire;
Fair fields appear below, such as he left
Far distant, such as he would die to find,—
He seeks them headlong, and is seen no more.
The spleen is seldom felt where Flora reigns;
The lowering eye, the petulance, the frown,
And sullen sadness that o'ershade, distort,
And mar the face of beauty, when no cause
For such immeasurable woe appears,
These Flora banishes, and gives the fair
Sweet smiles and bloom less transient than her own.
It is the constant revolution stale
And tasteless, of the same repeated joys[33],
That palls and satiates, and makes languid life
A pedler's pack, that bows the bearer down.
Health suffers, and the spirits ebb; the heart
Recoils from its own choice,—at the full feast
Is famish'd,—finds no music in the song,
No smartness in the jest, and wonders why.
Yet thousands still desire to journey on,
Though halt and weary of the path they tread.
The paralytic who can hold her cards
But cannot play them, borrows a friend's hand
To deal and shuffle, to divide and sort
Her mingled suits and sequences, and sits
Spectatress both and spectacle, a sad

[33] Like cats in air pumps, to subsist we strive
On joys too thin to keep the soul alive.
Young, Satire v.

And silent cypher, while her proxy plays.
Others are dragg'd into the crowded room
Between supporters; and once seated, sit
Through downright inability to rise,
Till the stout bearers lift the corpse again[34].
These speak a loud memento. Yet even these
Themselves love life, and cling to it, as he
That overhangs a torrent to a twig.
They love it, and yet loathe it; fear to die,
Yet scorn the purposes for which they live.
Then wherefore not renounce them? No—the dread,
The slavish dread of solitude that breeds
Reflection and remorse, the fear of shame,
And their inveterate habits, all forbid.

Whom call we gay? That honour has been long
The boast of mere pretenders to the name.
The innocent are gay[35];—the lark is gay
That dries his feathers saturate with dew
Beneath the rosy cloud, while yet the beams
Of day-spring overshoot his humble nest.
The peasant too, a witness of his song,
Himself a songster, is as gay as he.
But save me from the gaiety of those
Whose head-aches nail them to a noonday bed;
And save me too from theirs whose haggard eyes
Flash desperation, and betray their pangs

[34] ——— the gay assembly's gayest room
Is but an upper story to some tomb.
Young, Satire vi.

[35] And farewell merry heart,
The gift of guiltlesse minds.
Spenser. Epitaph on Sir P. Sidney.

For property stripp'd off by cruel chance;
From gaiety that fills the bones with pain,
The mouth with blasphemy, the heart with woe.
  The earth was made so various, that the mind
Of desultory man, studious of change,
And pleased with novelty, might be indulged.
Prospects however lovely may be seen
Till half their beauties fade; the weary sight,
Too well acquainted with their smiles, slides off
Fastidious, seeking less familiar scenes.
Then snug inclosures in the shelter'd vale,
Where frequent hedges intercept the eye,
Delight us, happy to renounce a while[36],
Not senseless of its charms, what still we love,
That such short absence may endear it more.
Then forests, or the savage rock may please,
That hides the sea-mew in his hollow clefts
Above the reach of man: his hoary head
Conspicuous many a league, the mariner
Bound homeward, and in hope already there,
Greets with three cheers exulting. At his waist
A girdle of half-wither'd shrubs he shows,
And at his feet the baffled billows die.
The common overgrown with fern[37], and rough

[36] But if much converse
Thee satiate, to short absence I could yield,
For solitude sometimes is best society,
And short retirement urges sweet return.
Par. Lost, ix. 247.

[37] E'en the wild heath displays her purple dies,
And midst the desert fruitful fields arise.
Pope. Windsor Forest.

With prickly goss, that shapeless and deform
And dangerous to the touch, has yet its bloom
And decks itself with ornaments of gold,
Yields no unpleasing ramble; there the turf
Smells fresh, and rich in odoriferous herbs
And fungous fruits of earth, regales the sense
With luxury of unexpected sweets.

There often wanders one, whom better days
Saw better clad, in cloak of sattin trimm'd
With lace, and hat with splendid ribband bound.
A serving-maid was she, and fell in love
With one who left her, went to sea and died.
Her fancy follow'd him through foaming waves
To distant shores, and she would sit and weep
At what a sailor suffers; fancy too,
Delusive most where warmest wishes are,
Would oft anticipate his glad return,
And dream of transports she was not to know.
She heard the doleful tidings of his death,
And never smiled again. And now she roams
The dreary waste; there spends the livelong day,
And there, unless when charity forbids,
The livelong night. A tatter'd apron hides,
Worn as a cloak, and hardly hides a gown
More tatter'd still; and both but ill conceal
A bosom heaved with never-ceasing sighs.
She begs an idle pin of all she meets,
And hoards them in her sleeve; but needful food,
Though press'd with hunger oft, or comelier clothes,
Though pinch'd with cold, asks never[38].—Kate is crazed.

[38] Man may dismiss compassion from his heart,
But God will never. Book vi. 442.

I see a column of slow-rising smoke
O'ertop the lofty wood that skirts the wild.
A vagabond and useless tribe there eat
Their miserable meal. A kettle slung
Between two poles upon a stick transverse,
Receives the morsel; flesh obscene of dog,
Or vermin, or at best, of cock purloin'd
From his accustom'd perch. Hard-faring race!
They pick their fuel out of every hedge,
Which kindled with dry leaves, just saves unquench'd
The spark of life. The sportive wind blows wide
Their fluttering rags, and shows a tawny skin,
The vellum of the pedigree they claim.
Great skill have they in palmistry, and more
To conjure clean away the gold they touch,
Conveying worthless dross into its place.
Loud when they beg, dumb only when they steal.
Strange! that a creature rational, and cast
In human mould, should brutalize by choice
His nature, and though capable of arts
By which the world might profit and himself,
Self-banish'd from society, prefer
Such squalid sloth to honourable toil.
Yet even these, though feigning sickness oft

An assembly such as earth
Saw never. Book vi. 816.

This agreeable cadence is Miltonic.

Which my mind
Knew never, till this irksome night.
Par. Lost, v. 35.

Clamour such as heard in heaven till now
Was never. *Par. Lost*, vi. 209.

They swathe the forehead, drag the limping limb
And vex their flesh with artificial sores,
Can change their whine into a mirthful note
When safe occasion offers, and with dance
And music of the bladder and the bag
Beguile their woes and make the woods resound.
Such health and gaiety of heart enjoy
The houseless rovers of the sylvan world;
And breathing wholesome air[39], and wandering much,
Need other physic none to heal the effects
Of loathsome diet, penury, and cold.
  Blest he, though undistinguish'd from the crowd
By wealth or dignity, who dwells secure
Where man, by nature fierce, has laid aside
His fierceness, having learnt, though slow to learn,
The manners and the arts of civil life.
His wants, indeed, are many; but supply
Is obvious; placed within the easy reach
Of temperate wishes and industrious hands.
Here virtue thrives as in her proper soil;
Not rude and surly, and beset with thorns,
And terrible to sight, as when she springs,
(If e'er she spring spontaneous,) in remote
And barbarous climes, where violence prevails,
And strength is lord of all; but gentle, kind,
By culture tamed, by liberty refresh'd,
And all her fruits by radiant truth matured.
War and the chase engross the savage whole:
War follow'd for revenge, or to supplant
The envied tenants of some happier spot,

[39] The physic of the field.
Essay on Criticism, iii. 174.

The chase for sustenance, precarious trust!
His hard condition with severe constraint
Binds all his faculties, forbids all growth
Of wisdom, proves a school in which he learns
Sly circumvention, unrelenting hate,
Mean self-attachment, and scarce aught beside.
Thus fare the shivering natives of the north,
And thus the rangers of the western world
Where it advances far into the deep,
Towards the Antarctic. Even the favour'd isles
So lately found, although the constant sun[40]
Cheer all their seasons with a grateful smile,
Can boast but little virtue; and inert
Through plenty, lose in morals what they gain
In manners, victims of luxurious ease.
These therefore I can pity, placed remote
From all that science traces, art invents,
Or inspiration teaches; and inclosed
In boundless oceans never to be pass'd
By navigators uninform'd as they,
Or plough'd perhaps by British bark again.
But far beyond the rest, and with most cause,
Thee, gentle savage[41]! whom no love of thee
Or thine, but curiosity perhaps,
Or else vain-glory, prompted us to draw
Forth from thy native bowers, to show thee here

[40] Could nature's bounty satisfy the breast,
The sons of Italy were surely blest.——
But small the bliss that sense alone bestows,
And sensual bliss is all the nation knows.
Goldsmith. Traveller.

[41] Omai.

With what superior skill we can abuse
The gifts of Providence, and squander life.
The dream is past. And thou hast found again
Thy cocoas and bananas, palms and yams,
And homestall thatch'd with leaves. But hast thou found
Their former charms? And having seen our state,
Our palaces, our ladies, and our pomp
Of equipage, our gardens, and our sports,
And heard our music; are thy simple friends,
Thy simple fare, and all thy plain delights
As dear to thee as once? And have thy joys
Lost nothing by comparison with ours?
Rude as thou art (for we return'd thee rude
And ignorant, except of outward show,)
I cannot think thee yet so dull of heart
And spiritless, as never to regret
Sweets tasted here, and left as soon as known.
Methinks I see thee straying on the beach,
And asking of the surge that bathes thy foot
If ever it has wash'd our distant shore.
I see thee weep, and thine are honest tears,
A patriot's for his country. Thou art sad
At thought of her forlorn and abject state,
From which no power of thine can raise her up.
Thus fancy paints thee, and though apt to err,
Perhaps errs little, when she paints thee thus.
She tells me too, that duly every morn
Thou climb'st the mountain top, with eager eye
Exploring far and wide the watery waste
For sight of ship from England. Every speck
Seen in the dim horizon, turns thee pale
With conflict of contending hopes and fears.

But comes at last the dull and dusky eve,
And sends thee to thy cabin, well-prepared
To dream all night of what the day denied.
Alas! expect it not. We found no bait
To tempt us in thy country. Doing good,
Disinterested good, is not our trade.
We travel far 'tis true, but not for nought;
And must be bribed to compass earth again
By other hopes and richer fruits than yours.
  But though true worth and virtue, in the mild
And genial soil of cultivated life
Thrive most, and may perhaps thrive only there,
Yet not in cities oft[42],—in proud and gay
And gain-devoted cities; thither flow,
As to a common and most noisome sewer,
The dregs and fæculence of every land.
In cities foul example on most minds
Begets its likeness. Rank abundance breeds
In gross and pamper'd cities sloth and lust,
And wantonness and gluttonous excess.
In cities, vice is hidden with most ease,
Or seen with least reproach; and virtue taught
By frequent lapse, can hope no triumph there
Beyond the achievement of successful flight.
I do confess them nurseries of the arts,
In which they flourish most; where in the beams
Of warm encouragement, and in the eye
Of public note they reach their perfect size.
Such London is, by taste and wealth proclaim'd
The fairest capital of all the world,

[42] This is the life which those who fret in guilt,
And guilty cities, never know. *Thomson. Autumn*, 1352.

By riot and incontinence the worst.
There touch'd by Reynolds, a dull blank becomes
A lucid mirror, in which nature sees
All her reflected features. Bacon there
Gives more than female beauty to a stone,
And Chatham's eloquence to marble lips.
Nor does the chisel occupy alone
The powers of sculpture, but the style as much;
Each province of her art her equal care.
With nice incision of her guided steel
She ploughs a brazen field, and clothes a soil
So sterile with what charms soe'er she will,
The richest scenery and the loveliest forms.
Where finds philosophy her eagle eye
With which she gazes at yon burning disk
Undazzled, and detects and counts his spots?
In London. Where her implements exact
With which she calculates, computes and scans
All distance, motion, magnitude, and now
Measures an atom, and now girds a world?
In London. Where has commerce such a mart,
So rich, so throng'd, so drain'd, and so supplied
As London, opulent, enlarged, and still
Increasing London? Babylon of old
Not more the glory of the earth, than she
A more accomplish'd world's chief glory now.
She has her praise. Now mark a spot or two
That so much beauty would do well to purge;
And show this Queen of Cities, that so fair
May yet be foul, so witty, yet not wise.
It is not seemly, nor of good report
That she is slack in discipline,—more prompt

To avenge than to prevent the breach of law.
That she is rigid in denouncing death[43]
On petty robbers, and indulges life
And liberty, and oft-times honour too
To peculators of the public gold.
That thieves at home must hang; but he that puts
Into his overgorged and bloated purse
The wealth of Indian provinces, escapes.
Nor is it well, nor can it come to good[44],
That through profane and infidel contempt[45]
Of holy writ, she has presumed to annul
And abrogate, as roundly as she may,
The total ordonance and will of God;
Advancing fashion to the post of truth,
And centering all authority in modes
And customs of her own, till sabbath rites
Have dwindled into unrespected forms,
And knees and hassocks are well-nigh divorced.
God made the country, and man made the town.
What wonder then[46], that health and virtue, gifts

[43] One to destroy is murder by the law,
And gibbets keep the lifted hand in awe.
To murder thousands takes a specious name.
Young. Satire vii.

Where little villains must submit to fate,
That great ones may enjoy the world in state.
Dispensary. Canto ii.

[44] It is not, nor it cannot come to good. *Hamlet.*

[45] An infidel contempt of holy writ
Stole by degrees upon his mind. *Excursion*, p. 63.

[46] What wonder then, if fields and regions here
Breathe forth elixir pure. *Par. Lost*, iii. 606.

That can alone make sweet the bitter draught
That life holds out to all, should most abound
And least be threatened in the fields and groves?
Possess ye therefore, ye who borne about
In chariots and sedans, know no fatigue[47]
But that of idleness, and taste no scenes
But such as art contrives,—possess ye still
Your element; there only ye can shine,
There only minds like yours can do no harm.
Our groves were planted to console at noon
The pensive wanderer in their shades. At eve
The moon-beam sliding softly in between
The sleeping leaves, is all the light they wish,
Birds warbling all the music. We can spare
The splendour of your lamps, they but eclipse
Our softer satellite. Your songs confound
Our more harmonious notes. The thrush departs
Scared, and the offended nightingale is mute.
There is a public mischief in your mirth,
It plagues your country. Folly such as yours
Graced with a sword, and worthier of a fan,
Has made, which enemies could ne'er have done,
Our arch of empire, steadfast but for you,
A mutilated structure, soon to fall.

[47] Pleasures fled to, to redress
The sad fatigue of idleness. *Green. Spleen.*

There too, my Paridel, she marked thee there,
Stretch'd on the rack of a too easy chair,
And heard thy everlasting yawn confess
The pains and penalties of idleness.
Dunciad, iv. 341.

THE TASK.

BOOK II.

ARGUMENT OF THE SECOND BOOK.

Which opens with reflections suggested by the conclusion of the former. Peace among the nations recommended on the ground of their common fellowship in sorrow. Prodigies enumerated. Sicilian earthquakes. Man rendered obnoxious to these calamities by sin. God the agent in them. The philosophy that stops at secondary causes, reproved. Our own late miscarriages accounted for. Satirical notice taken of our trips to Fontainbleau. But the pulpit, not satire, the proper engine of reformation. The Reverend Advertiser of engraved sermons. Petit maitre parson. The good preacher. Picture of a theatrical clerical coxcomb. Story-tellers and jesters in the pulpit reproved. Apostrophe to popular applause. Retailers of ancient philosophy expostulated with. Sum of the whole matter. Effects of sacerdotal mismanagement on the laity. Their folly and extravagance. The mischiefs of profusion. Profusion itself, with all its consequent evils, ascribed, as to its principal cause, to the want of discipline in the Universities.

THE TASK.

BOOK II.

THE TIME-PIECE.

Oh for a lodge in some vast wilderness[1],
Some boundless contiguity of shade,
Where rumour of oppression and deceit,
Of unsuccessful or successful war
Might never reach me more! My ear is pain'd,
My soul is sick with every day's report
Of wrong and outrage with which earth is fill'd.
There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart,
It does not feel for man. The natural bond
Of brotherhood is sever'd as the flax
That falls asunder at the touch of fire.
He finds his fellow guilty of a skin
Not colour'd like his own[2], and having power
To inforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause
Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey.
Lands intersected by a narrow frith
Abhor each other. Mountains interposed,

[1] Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place, that I might leave my people and go from them.—*Jeremiah*, ix. 2.

[2] Not remembering that he is (as old Fuller says) "the image of God cut in ebony."

Make enemies of nations who had else
Like kindred drops been mingled into one.
Thus man devotes his brother, and destroys;
And worse than all, and most to be deplored
As human nature's broadest, foulest blot,
Chains him, and tasks him, and exacts his sweat
With stripes, that mercy with a bleeding heart
Weeps when she sees inflicted on a beast.
Then what is man? And what man seeing this,
And having human feelings, does not blush
And hang his head, to think himself a man?
I would not have a slave to till my ground,
To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
That sinews bought and sold have ever earn'd.
No: dear as freedom is, and in my heart's
Just estimation prized above all price,
I had much rather be myself the slave
And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.
We have no slaves at home.—Then why abroad?
And they themselves once ferried o'er the wave
That parts us, are emancipate and loosed.
Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs
Receive our air, that moment they are free,
They touch our country and their shackles fall.
That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud
And jealous of the blessing. Spread it then,
And let it circulate through every vein
Of all your empire! that where Britain's power
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too.
  Sure there is need of social intercourse,
Benevolence and peace and mutual aid

Between the nations, in a world that seems
To toll the death-bell of its own decease,
And by the voice of all its elements
To preach the general doom[3]. When were the winds
Let slip[4] with such a warrant to destroy?
When did the waves so haughtily o'erleap
Their ancient barriers, deluging the dry?
Fire from beneath, and meteors[5] from above
Portentous, unexampled, unexplained,
Have kindled beacons in the skies; and the old
And crazy earth has had her shaking fits
More frequent, and foregone her usual rest.
Is it a time[6] to wrangle, when the props
And pillars of our planet seem to fail,
And Nature[7] with a dim and sickly eye
To wait the close of all? But grant her end
More distant, and that prophecy demands
A longer respite, unaccomplished yet;
Still they are frowning signals, and bespeak
Displeasure in his breast who smites the earth
Or heals it, makes it languish or rejoice.

[3] Alluding to the late calamities at Jamaica. C.

[4] Cry havock, and let slip the dogs of war.
Julius Cæsar, act iii.

[5] August 18, 1783. C.

[6] Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, &c.
2 Kings, v. 26.

Are not you moved, when all the sway of earth
Shakes, like a thing unfirm? *Julius Cæsar*. Act i.

[7] Alluding to the fog that covered both Europe and Asia during the whole summer of 1783. C.

And 'tis but seemly, that where all deserve
And stand exposed by common peccancy
To what no few have felt, there should be peace,
And brethren in calamity should love.
Alas for Sicily! rude fragments now[8]
Lie scatter'd where the shapely column stood.
Her palaces are dust. In all her streets
The voice of singing[9] and the sprightly chord
Are silent. Revelry and dance and show
Suffer a syncope and solemn pause,
While God performs upon the trembling stage
Of his own works, his dreadful part alone.
How does the earth receive him?—with what signs
Of gratulation and delight, her king?
Pours she not all her choicest fruits abroad,
Her sweetest flowers, her aromatic gums,
Disclosing paradise where'er he treads?
She quakes at his approach. Her hollow womb
Conceiving thunders, through a thousand deeps
And fiery caverns roars beneath his foot.
The hills move lightly[10] and the mountains smoke,

[8] Where cattle pastured late, now scattered lies
With carcasses and arms, the ensanguined field
Deserted. *Par. Lost*, xi. 659.

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughter'd saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold.
Milton. Sonnet 18.

[9] All the merry hearted do sigh. The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth. The city of confusion is broken down.
Isaiah, xxiv.

[10] I beheld the mountains, and they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly.—*Jeremiah*, iv. 24.

For He has touch'd them. From the extremest point
Of elevation down into the abyss,
His wrath is busy and his frown is felt.
The rocks fall headlong and the valleys rise;
The rivers die into offensive pools,
And charged with putrid verdure, breathe a gross
And mortal nuisance into all the air.
What solid was, by transformation strange
Grows fluid; and the fixt and rooted earth
Tormented into billows heaves and swells,
Or with vortiginous and hideous whirl
Sucks down its prey insatiable. Immense
The tumult and the overthrow, the pangs
And agonies of human and of brute
Multitudes, fugitive on every side,
And fugitive in vain. The sylvan scene
Migrates uplifted, and with all its soil
Alighting in far distant fields, finds out
A new possessor, and survives the change.
Ocean has caught the frenzy, and upwrought
To an enormous and o'erbearing height,
Not by a mighty wind, but by that voice
Which winds and waves obey, invades the shore
Resistless. Never such a sudden flood,
Upridged so high, and sent on such a charge,
Possess'd an inland scene. Where now the throng
That press'd the beach, and hasty to depart
Look'd to the sea for safety? They are gone,
Gone with the refluent wave into the deep,
A prince with half his people. Ancient towers,
And roofs embattled high, the gloomy scenes
Where beauty oft and letter'd worth consume

Life in the unproductive shades of death,
Fall prone; the pale inhabitants come forth,
And happy in their unforeseen release
From all the rigours of restraint, enjoy
The terrors of the day that sets them free.
Who then that has thee, would not hold thee fast,
Freedom! whom they that lose thee, so regret,
That even a judgement making way for thee,
Seems in their eyes, a mercy, for thy sake.
Such evil sin hath wrought; and such a flame
Kindled in heaven, that it burns down to earth,
And in the furious inquest that it makes
On God's behalf, lays waste his fairest works.
The very elements, though each be meant
The minister of man, to serve his wants,
Conspire against him. With his breath, he draws
A plague into his blood, and cannot use
Life's necessary means, but he must die.
Storms rise to o'erwhelm him: or if stormy winds
Rise not, the waters of the deep shall rise,
And needing none assistance of the storm,
Shall roll themselves ashore, and reach him there.
The earth shall shake him out of all his holds,
Or make his house his grave: nor so content,
Shall counterfeit the motions of the flood,
And drown him in her dry and dusty gulfs.
What then,—were they the wicked above all,
And we the righteous, whose fast anchor'd isle
Moved not, while theirs was rock'd like a light skiff,
The sport of every wave? No: none are clear,
And none than we more guilty. But where all
Stand chargeable with guilt, and to the shafts

Of wrath obnoxious, God may chuse his mark,
May punish, if he please, the less, to warn
The more malignant. If he spared not them,
Tremble and be amazed at thine escape,
Far guiltier England! lest he spare not thee.
  Happy the man who sees a God employed
In all the good and ill that checquer life!
Resolving all events with their effects
And manifold results, into the will
And arbitration wise of the Supreme.
Did not his eye rule all things, and intend
The least of our concerns, (since from the least
The greatest oft originate,)—could chance
Find place in his dominion, or dispose
One lawless particle to thwart his plan,
Then God might be surprised, and unforeseen
Contingence might alarm him, and disturb
The smooth and equal course of his affairs.
This truth, philosophy, though eagle-eyed
In Nature's tendencies, oft overlooks,
And having found his instrument, forgets
Or disregards, or more presumptuous still,
Denies the power that wields it. God proclaims
His hot displeasure against foolish men
That live an atheist life; involves the heaven
In tempests, quits his grasp upon the winds
And gives them all their fury; bids a plague
Kindle a fiery boil upon the skin,
And putrify the breath of blooming health.
He calls for famine, and the meagre fiend
Blows mildew from between his shrivel'd lips,
And taints the golden ear. He springs his mines,

And desolates a nation at a blast.
Forth steps the spruce philosopher, and tells
Of homogeneal and discordant springs
And principles; of causes, how they work
By necessary laws their sure effects;
Of action and re-action. He has found
The source of the disease that nature feels,
And bids the world take heart and banish fear.
Thou fool! will thy discovery of the cause
Suspend the effect or heal it? Has not God
Still wrought by means since first he made the world,
And did he not of old employ his means
To drown it? What is his creation less
Than a capacious reservoir of means
Form'd for his use, and ready at his will?
Go[11], dress thine eyes with eye-salve, ask of him
Or ask of whomsoever he has taught,
And learn, though late, the genuine cause of all.
  England, with all thy faults, I love thee still,
My country! and while yet a nook is left
Where English minds and manners may be found,
Shall be constrain'd to love thee. Though thy clime
Be fickle, and thy year, most part, deformed
With dripping rains, or wither'd by a frost,
I would not yet exchange thy sullen skies
And fields without a flower, for warmer France
With all her vines; nor for Ausonia's groves
Of golden fruitage and her myrtle bowers.
To shake thy senate, and from heights sublime

[11] Go, teach eternal wisdom how to rule,
Then drop into thyself and be a fool.
Pope. Essay on Man, ii. 29.

Of patriot eloquence to flash down fire
Upon thy foes, was never meant my task;
But I can feel thy fortunes, and partake
Thy joys and sorrows with as true a heart
As any thunderer there. And I can feel
Thy follies too, and with a just disdain
Frown at effeminates, whose very looks
Reflect dishonour on the land I love.
How, in the name of soldiership and sense,
Should England prosper, when such things, as smooth
And tender as a girl, all essenced o'er
With odours, and as profligate as sweet,
Who sell their laurel for a myrtle wreath,
And love when they should fight; when such as these
Presume to lay their hand upon the ark
Of her magnificent and aweful cause?
Time was when it was praise and boast enough
In every clime, and travel where we might,
That we were born her children; praise enough
To fill the ambition of a private man,
That Chatham's language was his mother tongue,
And Wolfe's [12] great name compatriot with his own.
Farewell those honours, and farewell with them
The hope of such hereafter. They have fallen
Each in his field of glory: one in arms,
And one in council. Wolfe upon the lap
Of smiling victory that moment won,
And Chatham, heart-sick of his country's shame.

[12] Cowper wrote from his own recollection here. In one of his letters he says, "Nothing could express my rapture when Wolfe made the conquest of Quebec."

They made us many soldiers. Chatham still
Consulting England's happiness at home,
Secured it by an unforgiving frown
If any wrong'd her. Wolfe, where'er he fought,
Put so much of his heart into his act,
That his example had a magnet's force,
And all were swift to follow whom all loved.
Those suns are set. Oh rise some other such!
Or all that we have left is empty talk
Of old achievements, and despair of new.
Now hoist the sail, and let the streamers float
Upon the wanton breezes. Strew the deck
With lavender, and sprinkle liquid sweets,
That no rude savour maritime invade
The nose of nice nobility. Breathe soft
Ye clarionets, and softer still ye flutes,
That winds and waters lull'd by magic sounds
May bear us smoothly to the Gallic shore.
True, we have lost an empire,—let it pass.
True, we may thank the perfidy of France
That pick'd the jewel out of England's crown
With all the cunning of an envious shrew.
And let that pass,—'twas but a trick of state.
A brave man knows no malice, but at once
Forgets in peace the injuries of war,
And gives his direst foe a friend's embrace[13].
And shamed as we have been, to the very beard
Braved and defied, and in our own sea proved

[13] Who do for gold what Christians do for grace,
With open arms their enemies embrace.
Young. Satire vii.

Too weak for those decisive blows, that once
Insured us mastery there, we yet retain
Some small pre-eminence; we justly boast
At least superior jockeyship, and claim
The honours of the turf as all our own.
Go then, well worthy of the praise ye seek,
And show the shame ye might conceal at home,
In foreign eyes!—be grooms, and win the plate[14],
Where once your nobler fathers won a crown!—
'Tis generous to communicate your skill
To those that need it. Folly is soon learn'd[15];
And under such preceptors, who can fail?
There is a pleasure[16] in poetic pains
Which only poets know. The shifts[17] and turns,
The expedients and inventions multiform
To which the mind resorts, in chase of terms
Though apt, yet coy, and difficult to win,—
To arrest the fleeting images that fill
The mirror of the mind, and hold them fast,
And force them sit, till he has pencil'd off

[14] Then peers grew proud in horsemanship to excel,
Newmarket's glory rose, as Britain's fell.
Pope. Imit. of Horace, ii. 1.

[15] But difficulties soon abate
When birds are to be taught to prate,
And women are the teachers.
Tr. from Vincent Bourne.

[16] There is a pleasure in being mad, which only madmen know. *Nat. Lee.*

[17] 'Twere long to tell the expedients and the shifts
Which he that fights a season so severe
Devises. Book iii. 559.

A faithful likeness of the forms he views;
Then to dispose his copies with such art
That each may find its most propitious light,
And shine by situation, hardly less
Than by the labour and the skill it cost,
Are occupations of the poet's mind
So pleasing, and that steal away the thought
With such address, from themes of sad import,
That lost in his own musings, happy man!
He feels the anxieties of life, denied
Their wonted entertainment, all retire.
Such joys has he that sings. But ah! not such,
Or seldom such, the hearers of his song.
Fastidious, or else listless, or perhaps
Aware of nothing arduous in a task
They never undertook, they little note
His dangers or escapes, and haply find
There least amusement where he found the most[18].
But is amusement all? studious of song,
And yet ambitious not to sing in vain,
I would not trifle merely, though the world
Be loudest in their praise who do no more.
Yet what can satire, whether grave or gay?
It may correct a foible, may chastise
The freaks of fashion, regulate the dress,
Retrench a sword-blade, or displace a patch;
But where are its sublimer trophies found?

[18] *Damnant quod non intelligunt.* Cic.

Serious should be an author's final views;
Who write for pure amusement, ne'er amuse.
Young. Second Epis. to Pope.

What vice has it subdued? whose heart reclaim'd
By rigour, or whom laugh'd into reform?
Alas! Leviathan is not so tamed.
Laugh'd at, he laughs again; and stricken hard,
Turns to the stroke his adamantine scales,
That fear no discipline of human hands.
The pulpit therefore, (and I name it, fill'd
With solemn awe, that bids me well beware
With what intent I touch that holy thing;)
The pulpit, (when the satirist has at last,
Strutting and vapouring in an empty school,
Spent all his force, and made no proselyte;)
I say the pulpit (in the sober use
Of its legitimate peculiar powers,)
Must stand acknowledged, while the world shall stand,
The most important and effectual guard,
Support, and ornament of virtue's cause.
There stands the messenger of truth. There stands
The legate of the skies; his theme divine,
His office sacred, his credentials clear.
By him, the violated law speaks out
Its thunders, and by him, in strains as sweet
As angels use, the gospel whispers peace.
He stablishes the strong, restores the weak,
Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart,
And arm'd himself in panoply complete
Of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms
Bright as his own, and trains by every rule
Of holy discipline, to glorious war,
The sacramental host of God's elect.
Are all such teachers? would to heaven all were!
But hark,—the Doctor's voice!—fast wedged between

Two empirics he stands, and with swoln cheeks
Inspires the news, his trumpet. Keener far
Than all invective is his bold harangue,
While through that public organ of report
He hails the clergy; and defying shame,
Announces to the world his own and theirs.
He teaches those to read, whom schools dismiss'd,
And colleges, untaught; sells accent, tone,
And emphasis in score, and gives to prayer
The *adagio* and *andante* it demands.
He grinds divinity of other days
Down into modern use; transforms old print
To zigzag manuscript, and cheats the eyes
Of gallery critics by a thousand arts.—
Are there who purchase of the Doctor's ware?
Oh name it not in Gath!—it cannot be,
That grave and learned Clerks should need such aid.
He doubtless is in sport, and does but droll,
Assuming thus a rank unknown before,
Grand caterer and dry nurse of the church.
I venerate the man, whose heart is warm,
Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life
Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
That he is honest in the sacred cause.
To such I render more than mere respect,
Whose actions say that they respect themselves.
But loose in morals, and in manners vain,
In conversation frivolous, in dress
Extreme, at once rapacious and profuse,
Frequent in park, with lady at his side,
Ambling and prattling scandal as he goes,
But rare at home, and never at his books,

Or with his pen, save when he scrawls a card;
Constant at routes, familiar with a round
Of ladyships, a stranger to the poor;
Ambitious of preferment for its gold,
And well prepared by ignorance and sloth,
By infidelity and love of the world
To make God's work a sinecure; a slave
To his own pleasures and his patron's pride;—
From such apostles, O ye mitred heads,
Preserve the church! and lay not careless hands
On sculls that cannot teach, and will not learn [19].
Would I describe a preacher, such as Paul,
Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own,
Paul should himself direct me. I would trace
His master-strokes, and draw from his design.
I would express him simple, grave, sincere;
In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain;
And plain in manner. Decent, solemn, chaste,
And natural in gesture. Much impress'd
Himself, as conscious of his aweful charge,
And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
May feel it too. Affectionate in look,
And tender in address, as well becomes
A messenger of grace to guilty men.
Behold the picture!—Is it like?—Like whom?
The things that mount the rostrum with a skip,
And then skip down again; pronounce a text,
Cry, hem; and reading what they never wrote,—
Just fifteen minutes, huddle up their work,
And with a well-bred whisper close the scene.

[19] We could not teach, and must despair to learn.
Book vi. 620.

In man or woman, but far most in man,
And most of all in man that ministers
And serves the altar, in my soul I loath
All affectation. 'Tis my perfect scorn;
Object of my implacable disgust.
What!—will a man play tricks, will he indulge
A silly fond conceit of his fair form
And just proportion, fashionable mien
And pretty face, in presence of his God?
Or will he seek to dazzle me with tropes,
As with the diamond on his lily hand,
And play his brilliant parts before my eyes
When I am hungry for the bread of life?
He mocks his Maker, prostitutes and shames
His noble office, and instead of truth
Displaying his own beauty, starves his flock.
Therefore avaunt! all attitude and stare
And start theatric, practised at the glass.
I seek divine simplicity in him
Who handles things divine; and all beside,
Though learn'd with labour, and though much admired
By curious eyes and judgements ill-inform'd,
To me is odious as the nasal twang
Heard at conventicle[20], where worthy men
Misled by custom, strain celestial themes

[20] In the first edition thus—

At *conventicle* heard, where worthy men.
He used to lay about and stickle,
Like ram or bull at conventicle.
Hudibras, I. ii. 438.

A conventicle flush'd his greener years.
Dispensary. Canto iv.

Through the prest nostril, spectacle-bestrid.
Some, decent in demeanour while they preach,
That task perform'd, relapse into themselves,
And having spoken wisely, at the close
Grow wanton, and give proof to every eye,
Whoe'er was edified, themselves were not.
Forth comes the pocket mirror. First we stroke
An eyebrow; next, compose a straggling lock;
Then with an air, most gracefully perform'd,
Fall back into our seat; extend an arm
And lay it at its ease with gentle care,
With handkerchief in hand, depending low.
The better hand more busy, gives the nose
Its bergamot, or aids the indebted eye
With opera glass to watch the moving scene,
And recognize the slow-retiring fair.
Now this is fulsome, and offends me more
Than in a churchman slovenly neglect
And rustic coarseness would. An heavenly mind
May be indifferent to her house of clay,
And slight the hovel as beneath her care;
But how a body so fantastic, trim,
And quaint in its deportment and attire,
Can lodge an heavenly mind,—demands a doubt.
He that negotiates between God and man,
As God's ambassador, the grand concerns
Of judgement and of mercy, should beware
Of lightness in his speech. 'Tis pitiful
To court a grin, when you should woo a soul;
To break a jest, when pity would inspire
Pathetic exhortation; and to address
The skittish fancy with facetious tales,

When sent with God's commission to the heart.
So did not Paul. Direct me to a quip
Or merry turn in all he ever wrote,
And I consent you take it for your text,
Your only one, till sides and benches fail.
No: he was serious in a serious cause,
And understood too well the weighty terms
That he had ta'en in charge. He would not stoop
To conquer those by jocular exploits,
Whom truth and soberness assail'd in vain.
Oh, popular applause[21]! what heart of man
Is proof against thy sweet seducing charms?
The wisest and the best feel urgent need
Of all their caution in thy gentlest gales;
But swell'd into a gust,—who then, alas!
With all his canvass set, and inexpert
And therefore heedless, can withstand thy power?
Praise from the rivel'd lips of toothless, bald
Decrepitude; and in the looks of lean
And craving poverty; and in the bow
Respectful of the smutch'd artificer[22]
Is oft too welcome, and may much disturb
The bias of the purpose. How much more
Pour'd forth by beauty splendid and polite,
In language soft as adoration breathes?
Ah spare your idol! think him human still;

[21] The love of praise, howe'er conceal'd by art,
Reigns more or less, and glows, in every heart;
The proud to gain it, toils on toils endure,
The modest shun it but to make it sure.
Young. Satire i.

[22] Another lean unwashed artificer. *King John.*

Charms he may have, but he has frailties too;
Dote not too much, nor spoil what ye admire.
All truth is from the sempiternal source
Of light divine. But Egypt, Greece, and Rome
Drew from the stream below. More favour'd we
Drink, when we chuse it, at the fountain head.
To them it flow'd much mingled and defiled
With hurtful error, prejudice, and dreams
Illusive of philosophy, so call'd,
But falsely. Sages after sages strove
In vain, to filter off a chrystal draught
Pure from the lees, which often more enhanced
The thirst than slaked it, and not seldom bred
Intoxication and delirium wild.
In vain they push'd enquiry to the birth
And spring-time of the world, asked, whence is man?
Why form'd at all? And wherefore as he is?
Where must he find his Maker? With what rites
Adore him? Will He hear, accept, and bless?
Or does he sit regardless of his works?
Has man within him an immortal seed?
Or does the tomb take all? If he survive
His ashes, where? and in what weal or woe?
Knots worthy of solution, which alone
A Deity could solve. Their answers vague
And all at random, fabulous and dark,
Left them as dark themselves. Their rules of life
Defective and unsanction'd, proved too weak
To bind the roving appetite, and lead
Blind Nature to a God not yet reveal'd.
'Tis Revelation satisfies all doubts,
Explains all mysteries except her own,

And so illuminates the path of life
That fools discover it, and stray no more.
Now tell me, dignified and sapient sir,
My man of morals, nurtured in the shades
Of Academus, is this false or true?
Is Christ the abler teacher, or the schools?
If Christ, then why resort at every turn
To Athens or to Rome for wisdom short
Of man's occasions, when in Him reside
Grace, knowledge, comfort, an unfathom'd store?
How oft when Paul has served us with a text,
Has Epictetus, Plato, Tully preach'd!
Men that, if now alive, would sit content
And humble learners of a Saviour's worth,
Preach it who might[23]. Such was their love of truth,
Their thirst of knowledge, and their candour too.
And thus it is. The pastor, either vain
By nature, or by flattery made so, taught
To gaze at his own splendour, and to exalt
Absurdly, not his office, but himself;
Or unenlighten'd, and too proud to learn,
Or vicious, and not therefore apt to teach,
Perverting often by the stress of lewd
And loose example, whom he should instruct,
Exposes and holds up to broad disgrace
The noblest function, and discredits much
The brightest truths that man has ever seen.
For ghostly counsel, if it either fall
Below the exigence, or be not back'd

[23] Men whose life, learning, faith, and pure intent
Would have been held in high esteem with Paul.
Milton. Sonnet xix.

With show of love, at least with hopeful proof
Of some sincerity on the giver's part;
Or be dishonour'd in the exterior form
And mode of its conveyance, by such tricks
As move derision, or by foppish airs
And histrionic mummery, that let down
The pulpit to the level of the stage,
Drops from the lips a disregarded thing[24].
The weak perhaps are moved, but are not taught,
While prejudice in men of stronger minds
Takes deeper root, confirm'd by what they see.
A relaxation of religion's hold
Upon the roving and untutor'd heart
Soon follows, and the curb of conscience snapt,
The laity run wild.—But do they now?
Note their extravagance, and be convinced.
As nations ignorant of God, contrive
A wooden one, so we, no longer taught
By monitors that mother church supplies,
Now make our own. Posterity will ask
(If e'er posterity see verse of mine,)
Some fifty or an hundred lustrums hence,
What was a monitor in George's days?
My very gentle reader, yet unborn,
Of whom I needs must augur better things,
Since Heaven would sure grow weary of a world
Productive only of a race like us,
A monitor is wood. Plank shaven thin.
We wear it at our backs. There closely braced
And neatly fitted, it compresses hard

[24] Flaunts and goes down an unregarded thing.
Pope. Moral Essays, ii. 252.

The prominent and most unsightly bones,
And binds the shoulders flat. We prove its use
Sovereign and most effectual to secure
A form not now gymnastic as of yore,
From rickets and distortion, else, our lot.
But thus admonish'd we can walk erect,
One proof at least of manhood; while the friend
Sticks close, a Mentor worthy of his charge.
Our habits costlier than Lucullus wore,
And by caprice as multiplied as his,
Just please us while the fashion is at full,
But change with every moon. The sycophant
That waits to dress us, arbitrates their date,
Surveys his fair reversion with keen eye;
Finds one ill made, another obsolete,
This fits not nicely, that is ill conceived,
And making prize of all that he condemns,
With our expenditure defrays his own.
Variety's the very spice of life
That gives it all its flavour. We have run
Through every change that fancy at the loom
Exhausted, has had genius to supply,
And studious of mutation still, discard
A real elegance a little used
For monstrous novelty and strange disguise.
We sacrifice to dress, till household joys
And comforts cease. Dress drains our cellar dry,
And keeps our larder lean. Puts out our fires,
And introduces hunger, frost, and woe,
Where peace and hospitality might reign.
What man that lives and that knows how to live,
Would fail to exhibit at the public shows

A form as splendid as the proudest there,
Though appetite raise outcries at the cost?
A man of the town dines late, but soon enough
With reasonable forecast and dispatch,
To insure a side-box station at half price.
You think perhaps, so delicate his dress,
His daily fare as delicate. Alas!
He picks clean teeth, and busy as he seems
With an old tavern quill, is hungry yet.
The rout is folly's circle which she draws
With magic wand. So potent is the spell,
That none decoy'd into that fatal ring,
Unless by Heaven's peculiar grace, escape.
There we grow early grey, but never wise;
There form connexions, and acquire no friend;
Solicit pleasure hopeless of success;
Waste youth in occupations only fit
For second childhood, and devote old age
To sports which only childhood could excuse[25].
There they are happiest who dissemble best
Their weariness; and they the most polite
Who squander time and treasure with a smile,
Though at their own destruction. She that asks
Her dear five hundred friends, contemns them all,
And hates their coming. They, what can they less?

[25] At last to follies youth could scarce defend,
It grows their age's prudence to pretend;
Ashamed to own they gave delight before,
Reduced to feign it when they give no more:
As hags hold sabbaths less for joy than spite,
So these their merry, miserable night.
Pope. Moral Essays. Epist. ii. 235.

Make just reprisals, and with cringe and shrug
And bow obsequious, hide their hate of her[26].
All catch the frenzy, downward from her Grace,
Whose flambeaux flash against the morning skies
And gild our chamber ceilings as they pass,
To her who, frugal only that her thrift
May feed excesses she can ill afford,
Is hackney'd home unlackey'd,—who in haste
Alighting, turns the key in her own door,
And at the watchman's lantern borrowing light,
Finds a cold bed her only comfort left.
Wives beggar husbands, husbands starve their wives,
On Fortune's velvet altar offering up
Their last poor pittance;—Fortune most severe
Of goddesses yet known, and costlier far
Than all that held their routs in heathen heaven.—
So fare we in this prison-house the world:
And 'tis a fearful spectacle to see
So many maniacs dancing in their chains.
They gaze upon the links that hold them fast
With eyes of anguish, execrate their lot,
Then shake them in despair, and dance again.
Now basket up the family of plagues
That waste our vitals. Peculation, sale
Of honour, perjury, corruption, frauds
By forgery, by subterfuge of law,
By tricks and lies as numerous and as keen
As the necessities their authors feel;

[26] What though the dome be wanting, whose proud gate
Each morning vomits out the sneaking crowd
Of flatterers false, and in their turn abused,
Vile intercourse. *Thomson. Autumn*, 1243.

Then cast them closely bundled, every brat
At the right door. Profusion is its sire.
Profusion unrestrain'd, with all that's base
In character, has litter'd all the land,
And bred within the memory of no few,
A priesthood such as Baal's was of old,
A people such as never was till now.
It is a hungry vice:—it eats up all
That gives society its beauty, strength,
Convenience, and security, and use;
Makes men mere vermin, worthy to be trapp'd
And gibbeted as fast as catchpole claws
Can seize the slippery prey: unties the knot
Of union, and converts the sacred band
That holds mankind together, to a scourge.
Profusion deluging a state with lusts
Of grossest nature and of worst effects,
Prepares it for its ruin; hardens, blinds,
And warps the consciences of public men
Till they can laugh at virtue, mock the fools
That trust them, and in the end disclose a face
That would have shock'd credulity herself
Unmask'd, vouchsafing this their sole excuse,
Since all alike are selfish—why not they?
This does Profusion, and the accursed cause
Of such deep mischief, has itself a cause.

In colleges and halls, in ancient days,
When learning, virtue, piety and truth
Were precious, and inculcated with care,
There dwelt a sage call'd Discipline. His head
Not yet by time completely silver'd o'er,
Bespoke him past the bounds of freakish youth,

But strong for service still, and unimpair'd.
His eye was meek and gentle, and a smile
Play'd on his lips, and in his speech was heard
Paternal sweetness, dignity, and love[27].
The occupation dearest to his heart
Was to encourage goodness. He would stroke
The head of modest and ingenuous worth
That blush'd at its own praise, and press the youth
Close to his side that pleased him. Learning grew
Beneath his care, a thriving vigorous plant;
The mind was well inform'd, the passions held
Subordinate, and diligence was choice.
If e'er it chanced, as sometimes chance it must,
That one among so many overleap'd
The limits of control, his gentle eye
Grew stern, and darted a severe rebuke;
His frown was full of terror, and his voice
Shook the delinquent with such fits of awe
As left him not, till penitence had won
Lost favour back again, and closed the breach.
But Discipline, a faithful servant long,
Declined at length into the vale of years;
A palsy struck his arm, his sparkling eye
Was quench'd in rheums of age, his voice unstrung
Grew tremulous, and moved derision more
Than reverence, in perverse rebellious youth.
So colleges and halls neglected much
Their good old friend, and Discipline at length
O'erlook'd and unemploy'd, fell sick and died.
Then study languish'd, emulation slept,

[27] In every gesture dignity and love.
Par. Lost, viii. 489.

And virtue fled. The schools became a scene
Of solemn farce, where ignorance in stilts,
His cap well lined with logic not his own,
With parrot tongue perform'd the scholar's part,
Proceeding soon a graduated dunce.
Then compromise had place, and scrutiny
Became stone-blind, precedence went in truck,
And he was competent whose purse was so.
A dissolution of all bonds ensued,
The curbs invented for the muleish mouth
Of headstrong youth were broken; bars and bolts
Grew rusty by disuse, and massy gates
Forgot their office, opening with a touch;
Till gowns at length are found mere masquerade;
The tassell'd cap and the spruce band a jest,
A mockery of the world. What need of these
For gamesters, jockies, brothellers impure,
Spendthrifts and booted sportsmen, oftener seen
With belted waist and pointers at their heels,
Than in the bounds of duty? What was learn'd,
If aught was learn'd in childhood, is forgot,
And such expense as pinches parents blue,
And mortifies the liberal hand of love,
Is squander'd in pursuit of idle sports
And vicious pleasures; buys the boy a name,
That sits a stigma on his father's house,
And cleaves through life inseparably close
To him that wears it. What can after-games
Of riper joys, and commerce with the world,
The lewd vain world that must receive him soon,
Add to such erudition thus acquired
Where science and where virtue are profess'd?

They may confirm his habits, rivet fast
His folly[28], but to spoil him is a task
That bids defiance to the united powers
Of fashion, dissipation, taverns, stews.
Now blame we most the nurselings or the nurse?
The children crook'd and twisted and deform'd
Through want of care, or her whose winking eye
And slumbering oscitancy mars the brood?
The nurse no doubt. Regardless of her charge
She needs herself correction; needs to learn
That it is dangerous sporting with the world,
With things so sacred as a nation's trust,
The nurture of her youth, her dearest pledge.
All are not such. I had a brother once,—
Peace to the memory of a man of worth,
A man of letters, and of manners too;
Of manners sweet as virtue always wears,
When gay good-nature dresses her in smiles.
He graced a college[29] in which order yet
Was sacred, and was honour'd loved and wept[30]
By more than one, themselves conspicuous there.
Some minds are temper'd happily, and mixt
With such ingredients of good sense and taste
Of what is excellent in man, they thirst

[28] The sensual and the dark rebel in vain—
Slaves by their own compulsion. *Coleridge.*

It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters.—*Burke. Answer to Objections, &c.* 69.

[29] Ben'et College, Cambridge.

[30] Praised, wept, and honour'd by the Muse he loved.
Pope on Craggs.

With such a zeal to be what they approve,
That no restraints can circumscribe them more,
Than they themselves by choice, for wisdom's sake.
Nor can example hurt them, what they see
Of vice in others but enhancing more
The charms of virtue in their just esteem.
If such escape contagion, and emerge
Pure from so foul a pool, to shine abroad,
And give the world their talents and themselves,
Small thanks to those whose negligence or sloth
Exposed their inexperience to the snare,
And left them to an undirected choice.
  See then! the quiver broken and decay'd
In which are kept our arrows. Rusting there
In wild disorder and unfit for use,
What wonder if discharged into the world
They shame their shooters with a random flight,
Their points obtuse, and feathers drunk with wine.
Well may the church wage unsuccessful war
With such artillery arm'd. Vice parries wide
The undreaded volley with a sword of straw,
And stands an impudent and fearless mark.
  Have we not track'd the felon home, and found
His birthplace and his dam? the country mourns,
Mourns, because every plague that can infest
Society, and that saps and worms the base
Of the edifice that policy has raised,
Swarms in all quarters; meets the eye, the ear,
And suffocates the breath at every turn.
Profusion breeds them. And the cause itself
Of that calamitous mischief has been found:
Found too where most offensive, in the skirts

Of the robed pedagogue. Else, let the arraign'd
Stand up unconscious and refute the charge.
So when the Jewish Leader stretch'd his arm
And waved his rod divine, a race obscene
Spawn'd in the muddy beds of Nile, came forth
Polluting Egypt. Gardens, fields, and plains
Were cover'd with the pest. The streets were fill'd;
The croaking nuisance lurk'd in every nook,
Nor palaces nor even chambers 'scaped,
And the land stank, so numerous was the fry.

THE TASK.

BOOK III.

ARGUMENT OF THE THIRD BOOK.

Self-recollection and reproof. Address to domestic happiness. Some account of myself. The vanity of many of their pursuits who are reputed wise. Justification of my censures. Divine illumination necessary to the most expert philosopher. The question, What is truth? answered by other questions. Domestic happiness addressed again. Few lovers of the country. My tame hare. Occupations of a retired gentleman in his garden. Pruning. Framing. Greenhouse. Sowing of flower-seeds. The country preferable to the town even in the winter. Reasons why it is deserted at that season. Ruinous effects of gaming and of expensive improvement. Book concludes with an apostrophe to the metropolis.

THE TASK.

BOOK III.

THE GARDEN.

As one who long in thickets and in brakes [1]
Entangled, winds now this way and now that
His devious course uncertain, seeking home;
Or having long in miry ways been foiled
And sore discomfited, from slough to slough
Plunging, and half despairing of escape,
If chance [2] at length he find a green-sward smooth
And faithful to the foot, his spirits rise,
He chirrups brisk his ear-erecting steed,
And winds his way with pleasure and with ease;
So I, designing other themes, and call'd

[1] As one who long in populous city pent,
Where houses thick, and sewers annoy the air,
Forth issuing on a summer's morn to breathe
Among the pleasant villages and farms
Adjoin'd, from each thing met conceives delight.
Par. Lost, ix. 445.

[2] If chance with nymph-like step fair virgin pass,
What pleasing seem'd, for her now pleases more,
She most, and in her look sums all delight;
Such pleasure took the serpent to behold
This flowery plat, the sweet recess of Eve
Thus early, thus alone. *Par. Lost*, ix. 452.

To adorn the Sofa with eulogium due,
To tell its slumbers and to paint its dreams,
Have rambled wide. In country, city, seat
Of academic fame, (howe'er deserved,)
Long held, and scarcely disengaged at last.
But now with pleasant pace, a cleanlier road
I mean to tread. I feel myself at large,
Courageous, and refresh'd for future toil,
If toil await me, or if dangers new[3].
  Since pulpits fail, and sounding-boards reflect
Most part an empty ineffectual sound,
What chance that I, to fame so little known,
Nor conversant with men or manners much,
Should speak to purpose, or with better hope
Crack the satiric thong? 'Twere wiser far
For me enamour'd of sequester'd scenes,
And charm'd with rural beauty, to repose
Where chance may throw me, beneath elm or vine,
My languid limbs when summer sears the plains,
Or when rough winter rages, on the soft
And shelter'd Sofa, while the nitrous air
Feeds a blue flame and makes a cheerful hearth;
There undisturb'd by Folly, and apprized
How great the danger of disturbing her,
To muse in silence, or at least confine
Remarks that gall so many, to the few
My partners in retreat. Disgust conceal'd
Is oft-times proof of wisdom, when the fault
Is obstinate, and cure beyond our reach.
  Domestic happiness, thou only bliss

[3] To-morrow to fresh woods and pasture new.
Lycidas, 198.

Of Paradise that has survived the fall!
Though few now taste thee unimpair'd and pure,
Or tasting, long enjoy thee, too infirm
Or too incautious to preserve thy sweets
Unmixt with drops of bitter, which neglect
Or temper sheds into thy crystal cup;
Thou art the nurse of virtue. In thine arms
She smiles, appearing, as in truth she is,
Heaven-born and destined to the skies again.
Thou art not known where Pleasure is adored,
That reeling goddess with the zoneless waist
And wandering eyes, still leaning on the arm
Of Novelty, her fickle frail support;
For thou art meek and constant, hating change,
And finding in the calm of truth-tied love
Joys that her stormy raptures never yield.
Forsaking thee, what shipwreck have we made
Of honour, dignity, and fair renown,
Till prostitution elbows us aside
In all our crowded streets, and senates seem
Convened for purposes of empire less,
Than to release the adulteress from her bond.
The adulteress! what a theme for angry verse,
What provocation to the indignant heart
That feels for injured love! but I disdain
The nauseous task to paint her as she is,
Cruel, abandon'd, glorying in her shame.
No. Let her pass, and charioted along
In guilty splendour, shake the public ways!
The frequency of crimes has wash'd them white;
And verse of mine shall never brand the wretch,
Whom matrons now of character unsmirched

And chaste themselves, are not ashamed to own.
Virtue and vice had boundaries in old time
Not to be pass'd; and she that had renounced
Her sex's honour, was renounced herself
By all that prized it; not for prudery's sake,
But dignity's, resentful of the wrong.
'Twas hard perhaps on here and there a waif
Desirous to return and not received;
But was an wholesome rigour in the main,
And taught the unblemish'd to preserve with care
That purity, whose loss was loss of all.
Men too were nice in honour in those days,
And judged offenders well. And he that sharp'd,
And pocketed a prize by fraud obtain'd,
Was mark'd and shunn'd as odious. He that sold
His country, or was slack when she required
His every nerve in action and at stretch,
Paid with the blood that he had basely spared
The price of his default. But now, yes, now,
We are become so candid and so fair,
So liberal in construction, and so rich
In christian charity, a good-natured age!
That they are safe, sinners of either sex,
Transgress what laws they may. Well dress'd, well bred,
Well equipaged, is ticket good enough
To pass us readily through every door.
Hypocrisy[4], detest her as we may,
(And no man's hatred ever wrong'd her yet,)
May claim this merit still, that she admits
The worth of what she mimics with such care,

[4] Hypocrisy is the homage that vice pays to virtue.
Rochefoucauld, 460.

And thus gives virtue indirect applause;
But she has burnt her mask not needed here,
Where vice has such allowance, that her shifts
And specious semblances have lost their use.
I was a stricken deer that left the herd
Long since; with many an arrow deep infixt
My panting side was charged when I withdrew
To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
There was I found by one who had himself
Been hurt by the archers. In his side he bore
And in his hands and feet the cruel scars.
With gentle force soliciting the darts
He drew them forth, and heal'd and bade me live.
Since then, with few associates, in remote
And silent woods I wander, far from those
My former partners of the peopled scene,
With few associates, and not wishing more.
Here much I ruminate, as much I may,
With other views of men and manners now
Than once, and others of a life to come.
I see that all are wanderers, gone astray,
Each in his own delusions; they are lost
In chase of fancied happiness, still wooed
And never won. Dream after dream ensues,
And still they dream that they shall still succeed,
And still are disappointed; rings the world
With the vain stir. I sum up half mankind,
And add two-thirds of the remainder half,
And find the total of their hopes and fears
Dreams, empty dreams. The million flit as gay
As if created only, like the fly
That spreads his motley wings in the eye of noon,

To sport their season and be seen no more.
The rest are sober dreamers, grave and wise,
And pregnant with discoveries new and rare.
Some write a narrative of wars and feats
Of heroes little known, and call the rant
An history[5]; describe the man, of whom
His own coevals took but little note,
And paint his person, character and views,
As they had known him from his mother's womb.
They disentangle from the puzzled skein
In which obscurity has wrapp'd them up,
The threads of politic and shrewd design
That ran through all his purposes, and charge
His mind with meanings[6] that he never had,
Or having, kept conceal'd. Some drill and bore
The solid earth, and from the strata there
Extract a register, by which we learn
That He who made it and reveal'd its date
To Moses, was mistaken in its age.
Some more acute and more industrious still
Contrive creation; travel nature up

[5] Then came Domitian, dragging in Suetonius: There is no greater pest, said he, than that generation of scribbling rogues the historians,—when they have vented the humour and caprice of their own brains, that forsooth must be called—"the Life of such an Emperor."—*Quevedo. Vision* vii.

[6] Great actions, the lustre of which dazzles us, are by politicians represented as the effects of deep designs, whereas they are commonly the effects of caprice and passion.

Rochefoucauld. Maxim vii.

These leave the sense their learning to display,
And these explain the meaning quite away.

Pope. Essay on Crit. 116.

To the sharp peak of her sublimest height,
And tell us whence the stars; why some are fixt,
And planetary some; what gave them first
Rotation, from what fountain flow'd their light.
Great contest follows, and much learned dust
Involves the combatants, each claiming truth,
And truth disclaiming both[7]. And thus they spend
The little wick of life's poor shallow lamp,
In playing tricks with nature, giving laws
To distant worlds and trifling in their own.
Is 't not a pity now that tickling rheums
Should ever tease the lungs and blear the sight
Of oracles like these? Great pity too,
That having wielded the elements, and built
A thousand systems, each in his own way,
They should go out in fume and be forgot?
Ah! what is life thus spent? and what are they
But frantic who thus spend it? all for smoke,—
Eternity for bubbles, proves at last
A senseless bargain[8]. When I see such games
Play'd by the creatures of a Power who swears

[7] He his fabric of the heavens
Hath left to their disputes, perhaps to move
His laughter at their quaint opinions wide
Hereafter, when they come to model heaven
And calculate the stars, how they will wield
The mighty frame, how build, unbuild, contrive,
To save appearances. *Par. Lost*, viii. 76.

[8] What win I, if I gain the thing I seek?
A dream, a breath, a froth of fleeting joy:
Who buys a minute's worth to wail a week,
Or sells eternity to get a toy?
Shakespeare. Tarq. and Luc. st. 31.

That he will judge the earth, and call the fool[9]
To a sharp reckoning that has lived in vain;
And when I weigh this seeming wisdom well
And prove it in the infallible result
So hollow and so false,—I feel my heart
Dissolve in pity, and account the learn'd,
If this be learning, most of all deceived.
Great crimes alarm the conscience, but she sleeps
While thoughtful man is plausibly amused.
Defend me therefore common sense, say I,
From reveries so airy, from the toil
Of dropping buckets into empty wells[10],
And growing old in drawing nothing up!
'Twere well, says one sage erudite, profound,
Terribly arch'd and aquiline his nose,
And overbuilt with most impending brows,
'Twere well could you permit the world to live
As the world pleases. What's the world to you?—
Much. I was born of woman, and drew milk
As sweet as charity from human breasts.
I think, articulate, I laugh and weep
And exercise all functions of a man.
How then should I and any man that lives
Be strangers to each other[11]? Pierce my vein,
Take of the crimson stream meandering there

[9] Go, teach eternal Wisdom how to rule,
Then drop into thyself, and be a fool.
Pope. Essay on Man, ii. 29.

[10] Nor vainly buys what Gildon sells,
Poetic buckets for dry wells. *Spleen.*

[11] *Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto.*
Ter. Heaut.

And catechise it well. Apply your glass,
Search it, and prove now if it be not blood
Congenial with thine own. And if it be,
What edge of subtlety canst thou suppose
Keen enough, wise and skilful as thou art,
To cut the link of brotherhood, by which
One common Maker bound me to the kind?
True; I am no proficient, I confess,
In arts like yours. I cannot call the swift
And perilous lightnings from the angry clouds,
And bid them hide themselves in the earth beneath;
I cannot analyse the air, nor catch
The parallax of yonder luminous point
That seems half quench'd in the immense abyss:
Such powers I boast not;—neither can I rest
A silent witness of the headlong rage
Or heedless folly by which thousands die,
Bone of my bone, and kindred souls to mine.
God never meant that man should scale the heavens
By strides of human wisdom. In his works
Though wonderous, He commands us in his word
To seek him rather, where his mercy shines.
The mind indeed enlighten'd from above
Views him in all; ascribes to the grand cause
The grand effect; acknowledges with joy
His manner, and with rapture tastes his style.
But never yet did philosophic tube
That brings the planets home into the eye
Of observation, and discovers, else
Not visible, his family of worlds,
Discover Him that rules them; such a veil
Hangs over mortal eyes, blind from the birth

And dark in things divine. Full often too
Our wayward intellect, the more we learn
Of nature, overlooks her Author more,
From instrumental causes proud to draw
Conclusions retrograde and mad mistake.
But if his word once teach us, shoot a ray
Through all the heart's dark chambers, and reveal
Truths undiscern'd but by that holy light,
Then all is plain. Philosophy baptized
In the pure fountain of eternal love
Has eyes indeed; and viewing all she sees
As meant to indicate a God to man,
Gives *Him* his praise, and forfeits not her own.
Learning has borne such fruit in other days
On all her branches. Piety has found
Friends in the friends of science, and true prayer
Has flow'd from lips wet with Castalian dews.
Such was thy wisdom, Newton, child-like sage!
Sagacious reader of the works of God,
And in his word sagacious. Such too thine,
Milton, whose genius had angelic wings,
And fed on manna. And such thine in whom
Our British Themis gloried with just cause,
Immortal Hale! for deep discernment praised
And sound integrity not more, than famed
For sanctity of manners undefiled.
  All flesh is grass[12], and all its glory fades
Like the fair flower dishevel'd in the wind;
Riches have wings[13], and grandeur is a dream;
The man we celebrate must find a tomb,
And we that worship him, ignoble graves.

[12] Isaiah, xl. 6. [13] Prov. xxiii. 5.

Nothing is proof against the general curse
Of vanity, that seizes all below.
The only amaranthine flower on earth
Is virtue, the only lasting treasure, truth.
But what is truth[14]? 'twas Pilate's question put
To Truth itself, that deign'd him no reply.
And wherefore? will not God impart his light
To them that ask it?—Freely;—'tis his joy,
His glory, and his nature to impart:
But to the proud, uncandid, insincere
Or negligent enquirer, not a spark.
What's that which brings contempt upon a book
And him that writes it, though the style be neat,
The method clear, and argument exact?
That makes a minister in holy things
The joy of many and the dread of more,
His name a theme for praise and for reproach?
That while it gives us worth in God's account,
Depreciates and undoes us in our own?
What pearl is it that rich men cannot buy,
That learning is too proud to gather up,
But which the poor and the despised of all
Seek and obtain, and often find unsought?
Tell me, and I will tell thee, what is truth.
Oh friendly to the best pursuits of man,
Friendly to thought, to virtue, and to peace,
Domestic life in rural leisure pass'd[15]!
Few know thy value, and few taste thy sweets,

[14] Bacon otherwise—"What is truth? said jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an answer."—*Essay* i.

[15] O knew he but his happiness, of men
The happiest he! who far from public rage

Though many boast thy favours, and affect
To understand and chuse thee for their own.
But foolish man foregoes his proper bliss
Even as his first progenitor, and quits,
Though placed in paradise, (for earth has still
Some traces of her youthful beauty left,)
Substantial happiness for transient joy.
Scenes form'd for contemplation, and to nurse
The growing seeds of wisdom; that suggest
By every pleasing image they present
Reflections such as meliorate the heart,
Compose the passions and exalt the mind,
Scenes such as these, 'tis his supreme delight
To fill with riot and defile with blood.
Should some contagion kind to the poor brutes
We persecute, annihilate the tribes
That draw the sportsman over hill and dale
Fearless, and rapt away from all his cares;
Should never game-fowl hatch her eggs again,

Deep in the vale with a choice few retired,
Drinks the pure pleasures of the rural life.
Thomson. Autumn, 1389.

O sacred solitude! divine retreat!
Choice of the prudent, envy of the great,
By thy pure stream, or in thy waving shade
We court fair wisdom, that celestial maid;
The genuine offspring of her loved embrace,
Strangers on earth! are innocence and peace.
There from the ways of men laid safe ashore,
We smile to hear the distant tempest roar;
There bless'd with health, with business unperplex'd,
This life we relish, and ensure the next.
Young. Satire v.

Nor baited hook[16] deceive the fish's eye;
Could pageantry and dance and feast and song
Be quell'd in all our summer-month retreats;
How many self-deluded nymphs and swains
Who dream they have a taste for fields and groves,
Would find them hideous nurseries of the spleen,
And crowd the roads, impatient for the town!
They love the country, and none else, who seek
For their own sake its silence and its shade;
Delights which who would leave, that has a heart
Susceptible of pity, or a mind
Cultured and capable of sober thought,
For all the savage din of the swift pack
And clamours of the field? detested sport,
That owes its pleasures to another's pain,
That feeds upon the sobs and dying shrieks
Of harmless nature, dumb, but yet endued
With eloquence that agonies inspire
Of silent tears and heart-distending sighs!
Vain tears alas! and sighs that never find
A corresponding tone in jovial souls.
Well,—one at least is safe. One shelter'd hare
Has never heard the sanguinary yell
Of cruel man, exulting in her woes.
Innocent partner of my peaceful home,
Whom ten long years experience of my care
Has made at last familiar, she has lost
Much of her vigilant instinctive dread,
Not needful here, beneath a roof like mine.
Yes,—thou may'st eat thy bread, and lick the hand

[16] They triumph over the unsuspecting fish, whom they have decoyed by an insidious pretence of feeding.
Soame Jenyns. Second Disquisition.

That feeds thee; thou may'st frolic on the floor
At evening, and at night retire secure
To thy straw-couch, and slumber unalarm'd.
For I have gain'd thy confidence, have pledged
All that is human in me, to protect
Thine unsuspecting gratitude and love.
If I survive thee I will dig thy grave,
And when I place thee in it, sighing say,
I knew at least one hare that had a friend[17].
How various his employments, whom the world
Calls idle, and who justly in return
Esteems that busy world an idler too!
Friends[18], books, a garden, and perhaps his pen,
Delightful industry enjoyed at home,
And nature in her cultivated trim
Dressed to his taste, inviting him abroad:—
Can he want occupation who has these?
Will he be idle who has much to enjoy?
Me therefore, studious of laborious ease,
Not slothful; happy to deceive the time
Not waste it; and aware that human life
Is but a loan to be repaid with use,
When He shall call his debtors to account,
From whom are all our blessings, business finds
Even here. While sedulous I seek to improve,

[17] The allusion is to one of Gay's fables, which in the last generation most children knew by heart. In how different a spirit is Byron's epitaph on his dog!

To mark a friend's remains these stones arise,
I never knew but one, and here he lies.

[18] A friend, a book, the stealing hours secure,
And mark them down for wisdom.
Thomson. Autumn, 1337.

At least neglect not, or leave unemploy'd
The mind he gave me; driving it, though slack
Too oft, and much impeded in its work
By causes not to be divulged in vain,
To its just point the service of mankind.
He that attends to his interior self,
That has a heart and keeps it, has a mind
That hungers and supplies it, and who seeks
A social, not a dissipated life,
Has business; feels himself engaged to achieve
No unimportant, though a silent task.
A life all turbulence and noise may seem
To him that leads it, wise and to be praised;
But wisdom is a pearl with most success
Sought in still water, and beneath clear skies.
He that is ever occupied in storms,
Or dives not for it, or brings up instead,
Vainly industrious, a disgraceful prize.
  The morning finds the self-sequester'd man
Fresh for his task, intend what task he may.
Whether inclement seasons recommend
His warm but simple home, where he enjoys
With her who shares his pleasures and his heart,
Sweet converse, sipping calm the fragrant lymph
Which neatly she prepares; then to his book
Well chosen, and not sullenly perused
In selfish silence, but imparted oft
As aught occurs that she may smile to hear,
Or turn to nourishment digested well.
Or if the garden with its many cares,
All well repay'd, demand him, he attends
The welcome call, conscious how much the hand
Of lubbard labour needs his watchful eye,

Oft loitering lazily if not o'erseen,
Or misapplying his unskilful strength.
Nor does he govern only or direct,
But much performs himself; no works indeed
That ask robust tough sinews bred to toil,
Servile employ,—but such as may amuse,
Not tire, demanding rather skill than force.
Proud of his well-spread walls, he views his trees
That meet, (no barren interval between,)
With pleasure more than even their fruits afford,
Which, save himself who trains them, none can feel.
These therefore are his own peculiar charge;
No meaner hand may discipline the shoots,
None but his steel approach them. What is weak,
Distemper'd, or has lost prolific powers
Impair'd by age, his unrelenting hand
Dooms to the knife. Nor does he spare the soft
And succulent that feeds its giant growth
But barren, at the expense of neighbouring twigs
Less ostentatious, and yet studded thick
With hopeful gems. The rest, no portion left
That may disgrace his art, or disappoint
Large expectation, he disposes neat
At measured distances, that air and sun
Admitted freely may afford their aid,
And ventilate and warm the swelling buds.
Hence summer has her riches, autumn hence,
And hence even winter fills his wither'd hand
With blushing fruits, and plenty not his own[19].
Fair recompense of labour well bestow'd
And wise precaution, which a clime so rude

[19] *Miraturque novos fructus et non sua poma.* Virg. C.

Makes needful still, whose Spring is but the child
Of churlish Winter, in her froward moods
Discovering much the temper of her sire.
For oft, as if in her the stream of mild
Maternal nature had reversed its course,
She brings her infants forth with many smiles,
But once deliver'd, kills them with a frown.
He therefore, timely warn'd, himself supplies
Her want of care, screening and keeping warm
The plenteous bloom, that no rough blast may sweep
His garlands from the boughs. Again, as oft
As the sun peeps and vernal airs breathe mild,
The fence withdrawn, he gives them every beam,
And spreads his hopes before the blaze of day.
To raise the prickly and green-coated gourd
So grateful to the palate, and when rare
So coveted, else base and disesteem'd,—
Food for the vulgar merely,—is an art
That toiling ages have but just matured,
And at this moment unessay'd in song.
Yet gnats have had, and frogs and mice long since
Their eulogy; those sang the Mantuan bard,
And these the Grecian in ennobling strains;
And in thy numbers, Phillips, shines for aye
The solitary Shilling. Pardon then,
Ye sage dispensers of poetic fame!
The ambition of one meaner far, whose powers
Presuming an attempt not less sublime,
Pant for the praise of dressing to the taste
Of critic appetite, no sordid fare,
A cucumber, while costly yet and scarce.
The stable yields a stercorarious heap

Impregnated with quick fermenting salts,
And potent to resist the freezing blast.
For ere the beech and elm have cast their leaf
Deciduous, and when now November dark
Checks vegetation in the torpid plant
Exposed to his cold breath, the task begins.
Warily therefore, and with prudent heed
He seeks a favour'd spot, that where he builds
The agglomerated pile, his frame may front
The sun's meridian disk, and at the back
Enjoy close shelter, wall, or reeds, or hedge
Impervious to the wind. First he bids spread
Dry fern or litter'd hay, that may imbibe
The ascending damps; then leisurely impose
And lightly, shaking it with agile hand
From the full fork, the saturated straw.
What longest binds the closest, forms secure
The shapely side, that as it rises takes
By just degrees an overhanging breadth,
Sheltering the base with its projected eaves.
The uplifted frame compact at every joint,
And overlaid with clear translucent glass,
He settles next upon the sloping mount,
Whose sharp declivity shoots off secure
From the dash'd pane the deluge as it falls:
He shuts it close, and the first labour ends.
Thrice must the voluble and restless earth
Spin round upon her axle, ere the warmth
Slow gathering in the midst, through the square mass
Diffused, attain the surface. When behold!
A pestilent and most corrosive steam,
Like a gross fog Bœotian, rising fast,

And fast condensed upon the dewy sash,
Asks egress; which obtained, the overcharged
And drench'd conservatory breathes abroad
In volumes wheeling slow, the vapour dank,
And purified, rejoices to have lost
Its foul inhabitant. But to assuage
The impatient fervour which it first conceives
Within its reeking bosom, threatening death
To his young hopes, requires discreet delay.
Experience, slow preceptress, teaching oft
The way to glory by miscarriage foul [19],
Must prompt him, and admonish how to catch
The auspicious moment, when the temper'd heat
Friendly to vital motion, may afford
Soft fermentation, and invite the seed.
The seed selected wisely, plump and smooth
And glossy, he commits to pots of size
Diminutive, well fill'd with well-prepared
And fruitful soil, that has been treasured long,
And drunk no moisture from the dripping clouds.
These on the warm and genial earth that hides
The smoking manure and o'erspreads it all,
He places lightly, and as time subdues
The rage of fermentation, plunges deep
In the soft medium, till they stand immersed.
Then rise the tender germs upstarting quick

[19] Let us know
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well
When our deep plots do fail. *Hamlet*, v. 2.

Into the right we err, and must confess
To oversights we often owe success.
Dispensary, canto iv.

And spreading wide their spongey lobes, at first
Pale, wan, and livid, but assuming soon,
If fann'd by balmy and nutritious air
Strain'd through the friendly mats, a vivid green.
Two leaves produced, two rough indented leaves,
Cautious he pinches from the second stalk
A pimple, that portends a future sprout,
And interdicts its growth. Thence straight succeed
The branches, sturdy to his utmost wish,
Prolific all, and harbingers of more.
The crowded roots demand enlargement now
And transplantation in an ampler space.
Indulged in what they wish, they soon supply
Large foliage, overshadowing golden flowers,
Blown on the summit of the apparent fruit.
These have their sexes; and when summer shines
The bee transports the fertilizing meal
From flower to flower, and even the breathing air
Wafts the rich prize to its appointed use.
Not so when winter scowls: assistant art
Then acts in nature's office, brings to pass
The glad espousals and insures the crop.
  Grudge not, ye rich, (since luxury must have
His dainties, and the world's more numerous half
Lives by contriving delicates for you,)
Grudge not the cost. Ye little know the cares,
The vigilance, the labour, and the skill
That day and night are exercised, and hang
Upon the ticklish balance of suspense,
That ye may garnish your profuse regales
With summer fruits brought forth by wintry suns.
Ten thousand dangers lie in wait to thwart

The process. Heat and cold, and wind and steam,
Moisture and drought, mice, worms, and swarming flies
Minute as dust and numberless, oft work
Dire disappointment that admits no cure,
And which no care can obviate. It were long,
Too long to tell the expedients and the shifts
Which he that fights a season so severe
Devises, while he guards his tender trust,
And oft, at last, in vain. The learn'd and wise
Sarcastic would exclaim, and judge the song
Cold as its theme, and like its theme, the fruit
Of too much labour, worthless when produced.

Who loves a garden, loves a green-house too.
Unconscious of a less propitious clime
There blooms exotic beauty, warm and snug,
While the winds whistle and the snows descend.
The spiry myrtle with unwithering leaf
Shines there and flourishes. The golden boast
Of Portugal and western India there,
The ruddier orange and the paler lime,
Peep through their polish'd foliage at the storm,
And seem to smile at what they need not fear.
The amomum there with intermingling flowers
And cherries hangs her twigs. Geranium boasts
Her crimson honours, and the spangled beau
Ficoides, glitters bright the winter long.
All plants of every leaf[20] that can endure
The winter's frown, if screen'd from his shrewd bite,
Live there and prosper. Those Ausonia claims,
Levantine regions these; the Azores send

[20] Flowers of all hue. *Par. Lost*, iv. 256

Their jessamine, her jessamine remote
Caffraria; foreigners from many lands
They form one social shade, as if convened
By magic summons of the Orphean lyre.
Yet just arrangement, rarely brought to pass
But by a master's hand, disposing well
The gay diversities of leaf and flower,
Must lend its aid to illustrate all their charms,
And dress the regular yet various scene.
Plant behind plant aspiring, in the van
The dwarfish, in the rear retired, but still
Sublime above the rest, the statelier stand.
So once were ranged the sons of ancient Rome,
A noble show! while Roscius trod the stage;
And so, while Garrick as renown'd as he,
The sons of Albion,—fearing each to lose
Some note of Nature's music from his lips,
And covetous of Shakespeare's[21] beauty seen
In every flash of his far-beaming eye.
Nor taste alone and well-contrived display
Suffice to give the marshal'd ranks the grace
Of their complete effect. Much yet remains
Unsung, and many cares are yet behind
And more laborious; cares on which depends
Their vigour, injured soon, not soon restored.
The soil must be renew'd, which often wash'd
Loses its treasure of salubrious salts,
And disappoints the roots; the slender roots
Close interwoven where they meet the vase

[21] While friends beheld thee give with eye, voice, mien,
More than theatric force to Shakespeare's scene.
Wordsworth. On Sir G. Beaumont.

Must smooth be shorn away; the sapless branch
Must fly before the knife; the wither'd leaf
Must be detach'd, and where it strews the floor
Swept with a woman's neatness, breeding else
Contagion, and disseminating death.
Discharge but these kind offices, (and who
Would spare, that loves them, offices like these?)
Well they reward the toil. The sight is pleased,
The scent regaled; each odoriferous leaf,
Each opening blossom freely breathes abroad
Its gratitude, and thanks him with its sweets.
So manifold, all pleasing in their kind,
All healthful, are the employs of rural life,
Reiterated as the wheel of time
Runs round, still ending, and beginning still.
Nor are these all. To deck the shapely knoll
That softly swell'd and gaily dress'd, appears
A flowery island from the dark green lawn
Emerging, must be deemed a labour due
To no mean hand, and asks the touch of taste.
Here also grateful mixture of well match'd
And sorted hues, (each giving each relief,
And by contrasted beauty shining more,)
Is needful. Strength may wield the ponderous spade[22],
May turn the clod, and wheel the compost home,
But elegance, chief grace the garden shows

[22] Coarse complexions
And cheeks of sorry grain will serve to ply
The sampler, and to tease the huswife's wool:
What need a vermeil-tinctured lip for that,
Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the morn?
Comus, 749

And most attractive, is the fair result
Of thought, the creature of a polish'd mind.
Without it, all is Gothic as the scene
To which the insipid citizen resorts
Near yonder heath; where industry mispent,
But proud of his uncouth ill-chosen task,
Has made a heaven on earth; with suns and moons
Of close-ramm'd stones has charged the incumber'd soil,
And fairly laid the zodiac in the dust.
He therefore who would see his flowers disposed
Sightly and in just order, ere he gives
The beds the trusted treasure of their seeds
Forecasts the future whole; that when the scene
Shall break into its preconceived display,
Each for itself, and all as with one voice
Conspiring, may attest his bright design.
Nor even then, dismissing as perform'd
His pleasant work, may he suppose it done.
Few self-supported flowers endure the wind
Uninjured, but expect the upholding aid[23]
Of the smooth-shaven prop, and neatly tied
Are wedded thus like beauty to old age,
For interest sake, the living to the dead.
Some clothe the soil that feeds them, far diffused

[23] Man, like the generous vine, supported lives,
The strength he gains is from the embrace he gives.
Essay on Man, iii. 311.

Or they led the vine
To wed her elm; she spoused about him twines
Her marriageable arms, and with her brings
Her dower, the adopted clusters, to adorn
His barren leaves. *Par. Lost*, v. 215.

And lowly creeping, modest and yet fair,
Like virtue, thriving most where little seen.
Some more aspiring catch the neighbour shrub
With clasping tendrils, and invest his branch
Else unadorn'd, with many a gay festoon
And fragrant chaplet, recompensing well
The strength they borrow with the grace they lend.
All hate the rank society of weeds
Noisome, and ever greedy to exhaust
The impoverish'd earth; an overbearing race,
That like the multitude made faction-mad
Disturb good order, and degrade true worth.
Oh blest seclusion from a jarring world
Which he thus occupied, enjoys! Retreat
Cannot indeed to guilty man restore
Lost innocence, or cancel follies past;
But it has peace, and much secures the mind
From all assaults of evil, proving still
A faithful barrier, not o'erleap'd with ease
By vicious custom, raging uncontrol'd
Abroad, and desolating public life.
When fierce temptation seconded within
By traitor appetite, and arm'd with darts
Temper'd in hell, invades the throbbing breast,
To combat may be glorious, and success
Perhaps may crown us; but to fly is safe[24].
Had I the choice of sublunary good,
What could I wish, that I possess not here?

[24] Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
And since 'tis hard to combat learns to fly.
Des. Village.

Health, leisure, means to improve it, friendship, peace;
No loose or wanton, though a wandering muse,
And constant occupation without care.
Thus blest, I draw a picture of that bliss;
Hopeless indeed that dissipated minds,
And profligate abusers of a world
Created fair so much in vain for them,
Should seek the guiltless joys that I describe
Allured by my report: but sure no less
That self-condemn'd they must neglect the prize,
And what they will not taste, must yet approve.
What we admire we praise; and when we praise
Advance it into notice, that its worth
Acknowledged, others may admire it too.
I therefore recommend, though at the risk
Of popular disgust, yet boldly still,
The cause of piety and sacred truth
And virtue, and those scenes which God ordain'd
Should best secure them and promote them most;
Scenes that I love, and with regret perceive
Forsaken, or through folly not enjoy'd[25].
Pure is the nymph, though liberal of her smiles,
And chaste, though unconfined, whom I extol;
Not as the prince in Sushan, when he call'd
Vain-glorious of her charms his Vashti forth
To grace the full pavilion. His design

[25] On every thorn delightful wisdom grows,
In every rill a sweet instruction flows;
But some untaught, ne'er hear the whispering rill,
In spite of sacred leisure blockheads still.
Young. Satire i.

Was but to boast his own peculiar good,
Which all might view with envy, none partake.
My charmer is not mine alone; my sweets
And she that sweetens all my bitters too,
Nature, enchanting Nature, in whose form
And lineaments divine I trace a hand
That errs not, and find raptures still renew'd,
Is free to all men, universal prize.
Strange that so fair a creature should yet want
Admirers, and be destined to divide
With meaner objects, even the few she finds.
Stript of her ornaments, her leaves and flowers,
She loses all her influence. Cities then[26]
Attract us, and neglected Nature pines
Abandon'd, as unworthy of our love.
But are not wholesome airs, though unperfumed
By roses, and clear suns though scarcely felt,
And groves if unharmonious, yet secure
From clamour, and whose very silence charms,
To be preferr'd to smoke, to the eclipse
That metropolitan volcanoes make,
Whose Stygian throats breathe darkness all day long,
And to the stir of commerce, driving slow,
And thundering loud, with his ten thousand wheels?
They would be, were not madness in the head
And folly in the heart; were England now
What England was, plain, hospitable, kind,
And undebauch'd. But we have bid farewell
To all the virtues of those better days,
And all their honest pleasures. Mansions once

[26] Tower'd cities please us then
And the busy hum of men. *L'Allegro.*

Knew their own masters, and laborious hinds
That had survived the father, served the son.
Now the legitimate and rightful Lord
Is but a transient guest, newly arrived
And soon to be supplanted. He that saw
His patrimonial timber cast its leaf,
Sells the last scantling, and transfers the price
To some shrewd sharper, ere it buds again.
Estates are landscapes, gazed upon awhile,
Then advertised, and auctioneer'd away.
The country starves, and they that feed the o'ercharged
And surfeited lewd town with her fair dues,
By a just judgement strip and starve themselves.
The wings that waft our riches out of sight
Grow on the gamester's elbows, and the alert
And nimble motion of those restless joints
That never tire, soon fans them all away.
Improvement too, the idol of the age,
Is fed with many a victim. Lo! he comes,—
The omnipotent magician, Brown appears.
Down falls the venerable pile, the abode
Of our forefathers, a grave whisker'd race,
But tasteless. Springs a palace in its stead,
But in a distant spot; where more exposed
It may enjoy the advantage of the North
And agueish East, till time shall have transformed
Those naked acres to a sheltering grove.
He speaks. The lake in front becomes a lawn,
Woods vanish, hills subside, and valleys rise,
And streams, as if created for his use,
Pursue the track of his directing wand,
Sinuous or straight, now rapid and now slow,

Now murmuring soft, now roaring in cascades,
Even as he bids. The enraptured owner smiles.
'Tis finish'd[27]! And yet finish'd as it seems,
Still wants a grace, the loveliest it could show,
A mine to satisfy the enormous cost.
Drain'd to the last poor item of his wealth,
He sighs, departs, and leaves the accomplish'd plan
That he has touch'd, retouch'd, many a long day
Labour'd, and many a night pursued in dreams,
Just when it meets his hopes, and proves the heaven
He wanted, for a wealthier to enjoy[28].
And now perhaps the glorious hour is come,
When having no stake left, no pledge to endear
Her interests, or that gives her sacred cause
A moment's operation on his love,
He burns with most intense and flagrant zeal
To serve his country. Ministerial grace
Deals him out money from the public chest;
Or if that mine be shut, some private purse
Supplies his need with an usurious loan,
To be refunded duly, when his vote[29],
Well-managed, shall have earn'd its worthy price.

[27] The pile is finish'd; every toil is past,
And full perfection is arrived at last;
When lo! my Lord to some small corner runs,
And leaves state rooms to strangers and to duns.

[28] The man who builds, and wants therewith to pay,
Provides a home from which to run away.
Young. Satire i.

[29] When men grow great from their revenue spent,
And fly from bailiffs into parliament.
Young. Satire i.

Oh innocent compared with arts like these,
Crape and cock'd pistol and the whistling ball
Sent through the traveller's temples! He that finds
One drop of heaven's sweet mercy in his cup,
Can dig, beg, rot, and perish well-content,
So he may wrap himself in honest rags
At his last gasp; but could not for a world
Fish up his dirty and dependent bread
From pools and ditches of the commonwealth,
Sordid and sickening at his own success.
  Ambition, avarice, penury incurr'd
By endless riot, vanity, the lust
Of pleasure and variety, dispatch,
As duly as the swallows disappear,
The world of wandering knights and 'squires to town.
London ingulfs them all. The shark is there
And the shark's prey; the spendthrift and the leech
That sucks him: there the sycophant and he
That with bare-headed and obsequious bows
Begs a warm office, doom'd to a cold jail
And groat *per diem* if his patron frown.
The levee swarms, as if in golden pomp
Were character'd on every statesman's door,
"BATTER'D AND BANKRUPT FORTUNES MENDED HERE."
These are the charms that sully and eclipse
The charms of nature. 'Tis the cruel gripe
That lean hard-handed poverty inflicts,
The hope of better things, the chance to win,
The wish to shine, the thirst to be amused,
That at the sound of Winter's hoary wing,
Unpeople all our counties, of such herds

Of fluttering, loitering, cringing, begging, loose
And wanton vagrants, as make London, vast
And boundless as it is, a crowded coop.
Oh thou resort and mart of all the earth,
Checquer'd with all complexions of mankind,
And spotted with all crimes; in whom I see
Much that I love, and more that I admire,
And all that I abhor; thou freckled fair
That pleases and yet shocks me, I can laugh
And I can weep, can hope, and can despond,
Feel wrath and pity, when I think on thee!
Ten righteous would have saved a city once,
And thou hast many righteous.—Well for thee,—
That salt preserves thee; more corrupted else,
And therefore more obnoxious at this hour,
Than Sodom in her day had power to be,
For whom God heard his Abraham plead in vain.

THE TASK.

BOOK IV.

ARGUMENT OF THE FOURTH BOOK.

The post comes in. The newspaper is read. The world contemplated at a distance. Address to Winter. The amusements of a rural winter evening compared with the fashionable ones. Address to Evening. A brown study. Fall of snow in the evening. The waggoner. A poor family-piece. The rural thief. Public houses. The multitude of them censured. The farmer's daughter, what she was. What she is. The simplicity of country manners almost lost. Causes of the change. Desertion of the country by the rich. Neglect of magistrates. The militia principally in fault. The new recruit, and his transformation. Reflection on bodies corporate. The love of rural objects natural to all, and never to be totally extinguished.

THE TASK.

BOOK IV.

THE WINTER EVENING.

HARK! 'tis the twanging horn! o'er yonder bridge
That with its wearisome but needful length
Bestrides the wintry flood, in which the moon
Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright;
He comes, the herald of a noisy world,
With spatter'd boots, strapp'd waist, and frozen locks,
News from all nations lumbering at his back.
True to his charge the close-pack'd load behind,
Yet careless what he brings, his one concern
Is to conduct it to the destined inn,
And having dropp'd the expected bag—pass on.
He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch,
Cold and yet cheerful: messenger of grief
Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some,
To him indifferent whether grief or joy.
Houses in ashes, and the fall of stocks,
Births, deaths, and marriages, epistles wet
With tears that trickled down the writer's cheeks
Fast as the periods from his fluent quill,
Or charged with amorous sighs of absent swains
Or nymphs responsive, equally affect
His horse and him, unconscious of them all.

But oh the important budget! usher'd in
With such heart-shaking music, who can say
What are its tidings? Have our troops awaked?
Or do they still, as if with opium drugg'd,
Snore to the murmurs of the Atlantic wave?
Is India free? and does she wear her plumed
And jewelled turban with a smile of peace,
Or do we grind her still? The grand debate,
The popular harangue, the tart reply,
The logic and the wisdom and the wit
And the loud laugh—I long to know them all;
I burn to set the imprison'd wranglers free,
And give them voice and utterance once again.
  Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
And while the bubbling and loud-hissing urn
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups
That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,
So let us welcome peaceful evening in.
Not such his evening, who with shining face
Sweats in the crowded theatre, and squeezed
And bored with elbow-points through both his sides,
Out-scolds the ranting actor on the stage.
Nor his, who patient stands till his feet throb
And his head thumps, to feed upon the breath
Of patriots bursting with heroic rage,
Or placemen, all tranquillity and smiles.
This folio of four pages, happy work!
Which not even critics criticise, that holds
Inquisitive attention while I read
Fast bound in chains of silence, which the fair,
Though eloquent themselves, yet fear to break,

What is it but a map of busy life,
Its fluctuations and its vast concerns?
Here runs the mountainous and craggy ridge
That tempts ambition[1]. On the summit, see,
The seals of office glitter in his eyes;
He climbs, he pants, he grasps them. At his heels,
Close at his heels a demagogue ascends[2],
And with a dexterous jerk soon twists him down
And wins them, but to lose them in his turn.
Here rills of oily eloquence in soft
Mæanders lubricate the course they take;
The modest speaker is ashamed and grieved
To engross a moment's notice, and yet begs,
Begs a propitious ear for his poor thoughts,
However trivial all that he conceives.
Sweet bashfulness! it claims, at least, this praise,
The dearth of information and good sense
That it foretells us, always comes to pass.
Cataracts of declamation thunder here,
There forests of no meaning spread the page
In which all comprehension wanders lost;
While fields of pleasantry amuse us there,
With merry descants on a nation's woes.
The rest appears a wilderness of strange
But gay confusion, roses for the cheeks
And lilies for the brows of faded age,
Teeth for the toothless, ringlets for the bald,

[1] Ambition this shall tempt to rise,
Then whirl the wretch from high. *Gray. Eton Coll.*

[2] When lo! push'd up to power, and crown'd their cares,
In comes another set, and kicketh them down stairs.
Castle of Indolence. Stanza liv.

Heaven, earth, and ocean plunder'd of their sweets,
Nectareous essences, Olympian dews,
Sermons and city feasts and favourite airs,
Æthereal journeys, submarine exploits,
And Katterfelto with his hair on end
At his own wonders, wondering for his bread.
'Tis pleasant through the loop-holes of retreat[3]
To peep at such a world. To see the stir
Of the great Babel and not feel the crowd.
To hear the roar[4] she sends through all her gates
At a safe distance, where the dying sound
Falls a soft murmur on the uninjured ear.
Thus sitting and surveying thus at ease
The globe and its concerns, I seem advanced
To some secure and more than mortal height,
That liberates and exempts me from them all.
It turns submitted to my view, turns round

[3] The world is a comedy, and I know no securer box from which to behold it than a safe solitude, and it is easier to feel than to express the pleasure which may be taken in standing aloof and contemplating the reelings of the multitude, the eccentric motions of great men, and how fate recreates itself in their ruin."—*Sir G. Mackenzie's Moral Essays*, 139.

[4] There from the ways of men laid safe ashore,
We smile to hear the distant tempest roar.
Young. Satire v.

While he, from all the stormy passions free
That restless men involve, hears, and but hears,
At distance safe, the human tempest roar,
Wrapt safe in conscious peace. The fall of kings,
The rage of nations, and the crush of states,
Move not the man, who, from the world escaped,
In still retreats, and flowery solitudes,
To nature's voice attends. *Autumn*, 1303.

With all its generations; I behold
The tumult and am still. The sound of war
Has lost its terrors ere it reaches me,
Grieves but alarms me not. I mourn the pride
And avarice that make man a wolf to man[5],
Hear the faint echo of those brazen throats[6]
By which he speaks the language of his heart,
And sigh, but never tremble at the sound.
He travels and expatiates, as the bee
From flower to flower, so he from land to land;
The manners, customs, policy of all
Pay contribution to the store he gleans;
He sucks intelligence in every clime,
And spreads the honey of his deep research
At his return, a rich repast for me.
He travels[7], and I too. I tread his deck,
Ascend his topmast, through his peering eyes
Discover countries, with a kindred heart
Suffer his woes and share in his escapes,
While fancy, like the finger of a clock,
Runs the great circuit, and is still at home.
Oh Winter! ruler of the inverted year,
Thy scatter'd hair with sleet like ashes fill'd,

[5] *Lupus est homo homini.* Plautus.

[6] The brazen throat of war had ceased to roar.
Par. Lost, xi. 713.

[7] Sometimes in distant climes I stray,
By guides experienced taught the way;
The wonders of each region view
From frozen Lapland to Peru,
Bound o'er rough seas and mountains bare,
Yet ne'er forsake my elbow chair. *Soame Jenyns.*

Thy breath congeal'd upon thy lips, thy cheeks
Fringed with a beard made white with other snows
Than those of age; thy forehead wrapt in clouds,
A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne
A sliding car indebted to no wheels,
But urged by storms along its slippery way;
I love thee, all unlovely as thou seem'st,
And dreaded as thou art. Thou hold'st the sun
A prisoner in the yet undawning East,
Shortening his journey between morn and noon,
And hurrying him impatient of his stay
Down to the rosy West. But kindly still
Compensating his loss with added hours
Of social converse and instructive ease,
And gathering at short notice in one group
The family dispersed, and fixing thought
Not less dispersed by daylight and its cares.
I crown thee King of intimate delights,
Fire-side enjoyments, home-born happiness,
And all the comforts that the lowly roof
Of undisturb'd retirement, and the hours
Of long uninterrupted evening know.
No rattling wheels stop short before these gates.
No powder'd pert proficient in the art
Of sounding an alarm, assaults these doors
Till the street rings. No stationary steeds
Cough their own knell, while heedless of the sound
The silent circle fan themselves, and quake.
But here the needle plies its busy task,
The pattern grows, the well-depicted flower
Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn
Unfolds its bosom, buds and leaves and sprigs

And curling tendrils, gracefully disposed,
Follow the nimble finger of the fair,
A wreath that cannot fade, of flowers that blow
With most success when all besides decay.
The poet's or historian's page, by one
Made vocal for the amusement of the rest;
The sprightly lyre, whose treasure of sweet sounds
The touch from many a trembling chord shakes out;
And the clear voice symphonious, yet distinct,
And in the charming strife triumphant still,
Beguile the night, and set a keener edge
On female industry; the threaded steel
Flies swiftly, and unfelt the task proceeds.
The volume closed, the customary rites
Of the last meal commence. A Roman meal,
Such as the mistress of the world once found
Delicious, when her patriots of high note,
Perhaps by moonlight, at their humble doors,
And under an old oak's domestic shade,
Enjoyed, spare feast! a radish and an egg.
Discourse ensues, not trivial[8], yet not dull,
Nor such as with a frown forbids the play
Of fancy, or proscribes the sound of mirth.
Nor do we madly, like an impious world,

[8] First of your kind! society divine!
Still visit thus my nights, for you reserved,
And mount my soaring soul to thoughts like yours.
Silence, thou lovely power! the door be thine,
See on the hallow'd hour that none intrude,
Save a few chosen friends, who sometimes deign
To bless my humble roof, with sense refined,
Learning digested well, exalted faith,
Unstudied wit, and humour ever gay. *Winter*, 540.

Who deem religion frenzy, and the God
That made them an intruder on their joys,
Start at his aweful name, or deem his praise
A jarring note: themes of a graver tone
Exciting oft our gratitude and love,
While we retrace with memory's pointing wand
That calls the past to our exact review,
The dangers we have 'scaped, the broken snare,
The disappointed foe, deliverance found
Unlook'd for, life preserved and peace restored,
Fruits of omnipotent eternal love.
Oh evenings[9] worthy of the Gods! exclaim'd
The Sabine bard. Oh evenings, I reply,
More to be prized and coveted than yours,
As more illumined and with nobler truths,
That I and mine and those we love, enjoy.
Is Winter hideous in a garb like this?
Needs he the tragic fur, the smoke of lamps,
The pent-up breath of an unsavoury throng,
To thaw him into feeling, or the smart
And snappish dialogue that flippant wits
Call comedy, to prompt him with a smile?
The self-complacent actor when he views
(Stealing a sidelong glance at a full house,)
The slope of faces from the floor to the roof,
(As if one master-spring control'd them all,)
Relax'd into an universal grin,
Sees not a countenance there that speaks a joy

[9] Thus in some deep retirement would I pass
The winter glooms, with friends of pliant soul,
Or blithe, or solemn, as the theme inspired.
Winter, 571.

Half so refined or so sincere as ours.
Cards were superfluous here[10], with all the tricks
That idleness has ever yet contrived
To fill the void of an unfurnish'd brain,
To palliate dullness and give time a shove.
Time as he passes us, has a dove's wing,
Unsoiled and swift and of a silken sound.
But the world's time, is Time in masquerade.
Theirs, should I paint him, has his pinions fledged
With motley plumes, and where the peacock shows
His azure eyes, is tinctured black and red
With spots quadrangular of diamond form,
Ensanguined hearts, clubs typical of strife,
And spades, the emblem of untimely graves.
What should be, and what was an hour-glass once
Becomes a dice-box, and a billiard mast
Well does the work of his destructive scythe.
Thus deck'd he charms a world whom fashion blinds
To his true worth, most pleased when idle most,
Whose only happy are their wasted hours.
Even misses, at whose age their mothers wore
The back-string and the bib, assume the dress
Of womanhood, sit pupils in the school
Of card-devoted time, and night by night
Placed at some vacant corner of the board,
Learn every trick, and soon play all the game.
But truce with censure. Roving as I rove,
Where shall I find an end, or how proceed?

[10] And cards are dealt, and chess-boards brought
To ease the pain of coward thought;
Happy result of human wit!
That Alma may herself forget. *Prior.*

As he that travels far, oft turns aside[11]
To view some rugged rock or mouldering tower,
Which seen delights him not; then coming home,
Describes and prints it, that the world may know
How far he went for what was nothing worth[12];
So I with brush in hand and pallet spread
With colours mixt for a far different use,
Paint cards and dolls, and every idle thing
That fancy finds in her excursive flights.
  Come evening once again[13], season of peace,
Return sweet evening, and continue long!
Methinks I see thee in the streaky west,
With matron-step slow-moving, while the night
Treads on thy sweeping train; one hand employ'd
In letting fall the curtain of repose[14]

[11] The want of method pray excuse,
Allowing for a vapoured Muse;
Nor to a narrow path confined,
Hedge in by rules a roving mind. *Spleen*, p. 2.

[12] To show the world how Garrick did not act.
Book vi. 677.

[13] Come, pensive nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain
Flowing with majestic train;
And sable stole of Cyprus lawn
Over thy decent shoulders drawn,
Come, but keep thy wonted state
With even step, and pensive gait. *H. Pers.* 31.

[14] Now came still evening on, and twilight grey
Had in her sober livery all things clad;
Silence accompanied, for beast and bird,
They to their grassy couch, these to their nests,
Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale;

On bird and beast, the other charged for man
With sweet oblivion of the cares of day;
Not sumptuously adorn'd, nor needing aid
Like homely-featured night, of clustering gems,
A star or two just twinkling on thy brow
Suffices thee; save that the moon is thine
No less than hers, not worn indeed on high
With ostentatious pageantry, but set
With modest grandeur in thy purple zone,
Resplendent less, but of an ampler round.
Come then, and thou shalt find thy votary calm
Or make me so. Composure is thy gift.
And whether I devote thy gentle hours
To books, to music, or the poet's toil,
To weaving nets for bird-alluring fruit;
Or twining silken threads round ivory reels
When they command whom man was born to please[15];
I slight thee not, but make thee welcome still.

She all night long her amorous descant sung,
Silence was pleased: now glowed the firmament
With living sapphires; Hesperus that led
The starry host, rode brightest, till the moon,
Rising in clouded majesty, at length
Apparent queen, unveil'd her peerless light,
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.

Par. Lost, iv. 598.

[15] Now, with all due admiration of the whole sex, says that excellent good man Mr. Park, and with undying attachment to *one* who constituted the prime blessing of half *my* life, this excessive tribute seems to be more courteous than correct. If man had been born chiefly to please women, it does not appear likely that he should have been formed first. The toy is rarely constructed before its playmate.

Morning Thoughts and Midnight Musings, p. 31.

Just when our drawing-rooms begin to blaze
With lights by clear reflection multiplied
From many a mirror, in which he of Gath,
Goliath, might have seen his giant bulk
Whole without stooping, towering crest and all,
My pleasures too begin. But me perhaps
The glowing hearth may satisfy awhile
With faint illumination that uplifts
The shadow to the ceiling, there by fits
Dancing uncouthly to the quivering flame.
Not undelightful[16] is an hour to me
So spent in parlour twilight; such a gloom
Suits well the thoughtful or unthinking mind,
The mind contemplative, with some new theme
Pregnant, or indisposed alike to all.
Laugh ye, who boast your more mercurial powers,
That never feel a stupor, know no pause
Nor need one. I am conscious, and confess
Fearless, a soul that does not always think.
Me oft has fancy ludicrous and wild
Sooth'd with a waking dream of houses, towers,
Trees, churches, and strange visages express'd
In the red cinders, while with poring eye
I gazed, myself creating what I saw.
Nor less amused have I quiescent watch'd
The sooty films that play upon the bars
Pendulous, and foreboding in the view
Of superstition prophesying still
Though still deceived, some stranger's near approach.

[16] Not undelightful is the ceaseless hum
To him who muses through the woods at noon.
Summer, 280.

'Tis thus the understanding takes repose
In indolent vacuity of thought,
And sleeps and is refresh'd. Meanwhile the face[17]
Conceals the mood lethargic with a mask
Of deep deliberation, as the man
Were task'd to his full strength, absorb'd and lost.
Thus oft reclined at ease, I lose an hour
At evening, till at length the freezing blast
That sweeps the bolted shutter[18], summons home
The recollected powers, and snapping short
The glassy threads with which the fancy weaves
Her brittle toys, restores me to myself.
How calm is my recess! and how the frost
Raging abroad, and the rough wind, endear
The silence and the warmth enjoy'd within[19]!
I saw the woods and fields at close of day
A variegated show; the meadows green
Though faded, and the lands where lately waved
The golden harvest, of a mellow brown,
Upturn'd so lately by the forceful share.
I saw far off the weedy fallows smile

[17] What's the bent brow, or neck in thought reclined?
The body's wisdom to conceal the mind.
Thus pedlers with some hero's head make bold,
Illustrious mark!—where pins are to be sold.
Young. Satire ii.

[18] That no rough blast may sweep
His garlands from the boughs.
Book ii. 441.

[19] *Suave, mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis,*
E terrâ magnum alterius spectare laborem.
Lucret. ii. 1.

With verdure not unprofitable, grazed
By flocks fast feeding, and selecting each
His favourite herb; while all the leafless groves
That skirt the horizon wore a sable hue,
Scarce noticed in the kindred dusk of eve.
To-morrow brings a change, a total change!
Which even now, though silently perform'd
And slowly, and by most unfelt, the face
Of universal nature undergoes.
Fast falls a fleecy shower[20]. The downy flakes
Descending and with never-ceasing lapse
Softly alighting upon all below,
Assimilate all objects. Earth receives
Gladly the thickening mantle, and the green
And tender blade that fear'd the chilling blast,
Escapes unhurt beneath so warm a veil.
In such a world, so thorny, and where none
Finds happiness unblighted[21], or if found,

[20] Through the hushed air the whitening shower descends
At first thin wavering; till at last the flakes
Fall broad, and wide, and fast, dimming the day
With a continual flow. The cherish'd fields
Put on their winter robe of purest white:
'Tis brightness all; save where the new snow melts
Along the mazy current. Low the woods
Bow their hoar head; and ere the languid sun
Faint from the west emits his evening ray
Earth's universal face, deep-hid and chill
Is one wild dazzling waste, that buries wide
The works of man. *Winter*, 229.

[21] In the centre of a world whose soil
Is rank with all unkindness, compassed round

Without some thistly sorrow at its side,
It seems the part of wisdom, and no sin
Against the law of love, to measure lots
With less distinguish'd than ourselves, that thus
We may with patience bear our moderate ills,
And sympathize with others, suffering more.
Ill fares the traveller now, and he that stalks
In ponderous boots beside his reeking team.
The wain goes heavily, impeded sore
By congregated loads adhering close
To the clogg'd wheels; and in its sluggish pace
Noiseless appears a moving hill of snow.
The toiling steeds expand the nostril wide,
While every breath by respiration strong
Forced downward, is consolidated soon
Upon their jutting chests. He, form'd to bear
The pelting brunt of the tempestuous night,
With half-shut eyes and pucker'd cheeks, and teeth
Presented bare against the storm, plods on.
One hand secures his hat, save when with both
He brandishes his pliant length of whip,
Resounding oft, and never heard in vain.
Oh happy! and in my account, denied
That sensibility of pain with which
Refinement is endued, thrice happy thou.
Thy frame robust and hardy, feels indeed

With such memorials, I have sometimes felt
That 'twas no momentary happiness
To have *one* enclosure where the voice that speaks
In envy or detraction is not heard.
Excursion, p. 279.

The piercing cold, but feels it unimpair'd.
The learned finger never need explore
Thy vigorous pulse; and the unhealthful East,
That breathes the spleen, and searches every bone
Of the infirm, is wholesome air to thee.
Thy days roll on exempt from household care;
Thy waggon is thy wife; and the poor beasts
That drag the dull companion to and fro,
Thine helpless charge, dependent on thy care.
Ah treat them kindly! rude as thou appear'st
Yet show that thou hast mercy, which the great
With needless hurry whirl'd from place to place,
Humane as they would seem, not always show.
  Poor, yet industrious, modest, quiet, neat,
Such claim compassion in a night like this,
And have a friend in every feeling heart.
Warm'd, while it lasts, by labour, all day long
They brave the season, and yet find at eve
Ill clad and fed, but sparely time to cool.
The frugal housewife trembles when she lights
Her scanty stock of brush-wood, blazing clear
But dying soon, like all terrestrial joys.
The few small embers left she nurses well,
And while her infant race with outspread hands
And crowded knees sit cowering o'er the sparks,
Retires, content to quake, so they be warm'd.
The man feels least, as more inured than she
To winter, and the current in his veins
More briskly moved by his severer toil;
Yet he too finds his own distress in theirs.
The taper soon extinguished, which I saw

Dangled along at the cold fingers' end
Just when the day declined, and the brown loaf
Lodged on the shelf half-eaten without sauce
Of savoury cheese, or butter costlier still,
Sleep seems their only refuge. For alas!
Where penury is felt the thought is chain'd,
And sweet colloquial pleasures are but few.
With all this thrift they thrive not. All the care
Ingenious parsimony takes, but just
Saves the small inventory, bed and stool,
Skillet and old carved chest, from public sale.
They live, and live without extorted alms
From grudging hands, but other boast have none
To soothe their honest pride that scorns to beg,
Nor comfort else, but in their mutual love.
I praise you much, ye meek and patient pair,
For ye are worthy; chusing rather far
A dry but independent crust, hard-earn'd
And eaten with a sigh, than to endure
The rugged frowns and insolent rebuffs
Of knaves in office [22], partial in the work
Of distribution; liberal of their aid
To clamorous importunity in rags,
But oft-times deaf to suppliants who would blush
To wear a tatter'd garb however coarse,
Whom famine cannot reconcile to filth;
These ask with painful shyness, and refused
Because deserving, silently retire.

[22] The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes.
Hamlet, iii. 1.

But be ye of good courage. Time itself
Shall much befriend you. Time shall give increase,
And all your numerous progeny well train'd,
But helpless, in few years shall find their hands,
And labour too. Meanwhile ye shall not want
What conscious of your virtues we can spare,
Nor what a wealthier than ourselves may send.
I mean the man, who, when the distant poor
Need help, denies them nothing but his name[23].
But poverty with most who whimper forth
Their long complaints, is self-inflicted woe,
The effect of laziness or sottish waste.
Now goes the nightly thief prowling abroad
For plunder; much solicitous how best
He may compensate for a day of sloth,
By works of darkness and nocturnal wrong.
Woe to the gardener's pale, the farmer's hedge
Plash'd neatly, and secured with driven stakes
Deep in the loamy bank! Uptorn by strength
Resistless in so bad a cause, but lame
To better deeds, he bundles up the spoil
An ass's burthen, and when laden most
And heaviest, light of foot steals fast away.

[23] Let humble Allen, with an awkward shame,
Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame.
Pope. Epis. to Sat.

Grand reservoirs of public happiness
Through secret streams diffusively they bless;
And while their bounties glide conceal'd from view,
Relieve our wants, and spare our blushes too.
Young. Satire vi.

Mr. Smith was the secret benefactor here alluded to.

Nor does the boarded hovel better guard
The well-stack'd pile of riven logs and roots
From his pernicious force. Nor will he leave
Unwrench'd the door however well secured,
Where chanticleer amidst his haram sleeps
In unsuspecting pomp. Twitched from the perch
He gives the princely bird with all his wives
To his voracious bag, struggling in vain,
And loudly wondering at the sudden change.
Nor this to feed his own. 'Twere some excuse
Did pity of their sufferings warp aside
His principle, and tempt him into sin
For their support, so destitute. But they
Neglected pine at home, themselves, as more
Exposed than others, with less scruple made
His victims, robb'd of their defenceless all.
Cruel is all he does. 'Tis quenchless thirst
Of ruinous ebriety that prompts
His every action and imbrutes the man.
Oh for a law to noose the villain's neck
Who starves his own! who persecutes the blood
He gave them in his children's veins, and hates
And wrongs the woman he has sworn to love.

Pass where we may, through city or through town,
Village or hamlet of this merry land
Though lean and beggar'd, every twentieth pace
Conducts the unguarded nose to such a whiff
Of stale debauch forth issuing from the styes
That law has licensed, as makes temperance reel.
There sit involved and lost in curling clouds
Of Indian fume, and guzzling deep, the boor,
The lacquey, and the groom. The craftsman there

Takes a Lethæan leave of all his toil;
Smith, cobler, joiner, he that plies the sheers,
And he that kneads the dough; all loud alike,
All learned, and all drunk. The fiddle screams
Plaintive and piteous, as it wept and wailed
Its wasted tones and harmony unheard.
Fierce the dispute whate'er the theme. While she,
Fell Discord, arbitress of such debate,
Perch'd on the sign-post, holds with even hand
Her undecisive scales [24]. In this she lays
A weight of ignorance, in that, of pride,
And smiles delighted with the eternal poise.
Dire is the frequent curse and its twin sound
The cheek-distending oath, not to be praised
As ornamental, musical, polite,
Like those which modern senators employ,
Whose oath is rhetoric, and who swear for fame.
Behold the schools in which plebeian minds,
Once simple, are initiated in arts
Which some may practise with politer grace,
But none with readier skill! 'Tis here they learn
The road that leads from competence and peace
To indigence and rapine; till at last
Society, grown weary of the load,
Shakes her encumber'd lap, and casts them out.
But censure profits little. Vain the attempt
To advertise in verse a public pest,
That, like the filth with which the peasant feeds
His hungry acres, stinks, and is of use.

[24] Chaos umpire sits
And by decision more embroils the fray.
Par. Lost, ii. 907.

The excise is fatten'd with the rich result
Of all this riot. And ten thousand casks,
For ever dribbling out their base contents,
Touch'd by the Midas finger of the state,
Bleed gold for Ministers to sport away.
Drink and be mad then! 'Tis your country bids.
Gloriously drunk obey the important call;
Her cause demands the assistance of your throats,
Ye all can swallow, and she asks no more.
Would I had fallen upon those happier days
That poets celebrate! those golden times
And those Arcadian scenes that Maro sings,
And Sydney, warbler of poetic prose.
Nymphs were Dianas then, and swains had hearts
That felt their virtues. Innocence it seems,
From courts dismiss'd, found shelter in the groves.
The footsteps of simplicity impress'd
Upon the yielding herbage (so they sing,)
Then were not all effaced. Then speech profane
And manners profligate were rarely found,
Observed as prodigies, and soon reclaim'd.
Vain wish! those days were never. Airy dreams
Sat for the picture; and the poet's hand
Imparting substance to an empty shade,
Imposed a gay delirium for a truth.
Grant it. I still must envy them an age
That favour'd such a dream, in days like these
Impossible, when virtue is so scarce,
That to suppose a scene where she presides
Is tramontane, and stumbles all belief.
No. We are polish'd now. The rural lass,
Whom once her virgin modesty and grace,

Her artless manners and her neat attire
So dignified, that she was hardly less
Than the fair shepherdess of old romance,
Is seen no more. The character is lost.
Her head adorn'd with lappets pinn'd aloft
And ribbands streaming gay, superbly raised
And magnified beyond all human size,
Indebted to some smart wig-weaver's hand
For more than half the tresses it sustains;
Her elbows ruffled, and her tottering form
Ill propp'd upon French heels; she might be deemed
(But that the basket dangling on her arm
Interprets her more truly,) of a rank
Too proud for dairy-work or sale of eggs.
Expect her soon with footboy at her heels,
No longer blushing for her awkward load,
Her train and her umbrella all her care.
The town has tinged the country. And the stain
Appears a spot upon a vestal's robe,
The worse for what it soils. The fashion runs
Down into scenes still rural, but alas!
Scenes rarely graced with rural manners now.
Time was when in the pastoral retreat
The unguarded door was safe. Men did not watch
To invade another's right, or guard their own.
Then sleep was undisturb'd by fear, unscared
By drunken howlings; and the chilling tale
Of midnight murther was a wonder heard
With doubtful credit, told to frighten babes.
But farewell now to unsuspicious nights
And slumbers unalarm'd. Now ere you sleep
See that your polish'd arms be primed with care,

And drop the night-bolt. Ruffians are abroad;
And the first larum of the cock's shrill throat
May prove a trumpet, summoning your ear
To horrid sounds of hostile feet within.
Even daylight has its dangers. And the walk
Through pathless wastes and woods, unconscious once
Of other tenants than melodious birds
Or harmless flocks, is hazardous and bold.
Lamented change! to which full many a cause
Inveterate, hopeless of a cure, conspires.
The course of human things from good to ill[25],
From ill to worse, is fatal, never fails.
Increase of power begets increase of wealth,
Wealth luxury, and luxury excess;
Excess, the scrofulous and itchy plague
That seizes first the opulent, descends
To the next rank contagious, and in time
Taints downward all the graduated scale
Of order, from the chariot to the plough.
The rich, and they that have an arm to check
The licence of the lowest in degree,
Desert their office; and themselves intent
On pleasure, haunt the capital, and thus
To all the violence of lawless hands
Resign the scenes their presence might protect.
Authority herself not seldom sleeps,
Though resident, and witness of the wrong.
The plump convivial parson often bears
The magisterial sword in vain, and lays
His reverence and his worship both to rest

[25] Thus will this latter, as the former world,
Still tend from bad to worse. *Par. Lost*, xii. 105.

On the same cushion of habitual sloth.
Perhaps timidity restrains his arm;
When he should strike, he trembles, and sets free,
Himself enslaved by terror of the band,
The audacious convict whom he dares not bind.
Perhaps, though by profession ghostly pure,
He too may have his vice, and sometimes prove
Less dainty than becomes his grave outside,
In lucrative concerns. Examine well
His milk-white hand. The palm is hardly clean,—
But here and there an ugly smutch appears.
Foh! 'twas a bribe that left it. He has touched
Corruption. Whoso seeks an audit here
Propitious, pays his tribute, game or fish,
Wildfowl or venison, and his errand speeds.
  But faster far and more than all the rest
A noble cause, which none who bears a spark
Of public virtue ever wish'd removed,
Works the deplored and mischievous effect.
'Tis universal soldiership has stabb'd
The heart of merit in the meaner class.
Arms, through the vanity and brainless rage
Of those that bear them, in whatever cause,
Seem most at variance with all moral good,
And incompatible with serious thought.
The clown, the child of nature, without guile,
Blest with an infant's ignorance of all
But his own simple pleasures, now and then
A wrestling match, a foot-race, or a fair,
Is ballotted, and trembles at the news.
Sheepish he doffs his hat, and mumbling swears
A Bible-oath to be whate'er they please,

To do he knows not what. The task perform'd,
That instant he becomes the serjeant's care,
His pupil, and his torment, and his jest.
His awkward gait, his introverted toes,
Bent knees, round shoulders, and dejected looks,
Procure him many a curse. By slow degrees,
Unapt to learn and formed of stubborn stuff,
He yet by slow degrees puts off himself,
Grows conscious of a change, and likes it well.
He stands erect, his slouch becomes a walk,
He steps right onward, martial in his air
His form and movement; is as smart above
As meal and larded locks can make him; wears
His hat or his plumed helmet with a grace,
And his three years of heroship expired,
Returns indignant to the slighted plough.
He hates the field in which no fife or drum
Attends him, drives his cattle to a march,
And sighs for the smart comrades he has left.
'Twere well if his exterior change were all,—
But with his clumsy port the wretch has lost
His ignorance and harmless manners too.
To swear, to game, to drink, to show at home
By lewdness, idleness, and sabbath-breach,
The great proficiency he made abroad,
To astonish and to grieve his gazing friends,
To break some maiden's and his mother's heart,
To be a pest where he was useful once,
Are his sole aim and all his glory now.
  Man in society is like a flower
Blown in its native bed. 'Tis there alone
His faculties expanded in full bloom

Shine out, there only reach their proper use.
But man associated and leagued with man
By regal warrant, or self-joined by bond
For interest-sake, or swarming into clans
Beneath one head for purposes of war,
Like flowers selected from the rest, and bound
And bundled close to fill some crowded vase,
Fades rapidly, and by compression marred
Contracts defilement not to be endured.
Hence charter'd boroughs are such public plagues,
And burghers, men immaculate perhaps
In all their private functions, once combined,
Become a loathsome body, only fit
For dissolution, hurtful to the main[26].
Hence merchants, unimpeachable of sin
Against the charities of domestic life,
Incorporated, seem at once to lose
Their nature, and disclaiming all regard
For mercy and the common rights of man,
Build factories with blood, conducting trade
At the sword's point, and dying the white robe
Of innocent commercial justice red[27].
Hence too the field of glory, as the world

[26] There is no corporate conscience. Men who act in bodies, it matters not whether large or small, mobs, senates, or cabinets, will without hesitation take their share in measures which if proposed to any one of them as an individual, would make him reply with the Syrian, "Am I dog, that I should do this thing!" —*Southey's Colloquies*, vol. ii. p. 193.

[27] Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No! this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red. *Macbeth*, ii. 2.

Misdeems it, dazzled by its bright array,
With all the majesty of its thundering pomp,
Enchanting music and immortal wreaths,
Is but a school where thoughtlessness is taught
On principle, where foppery atones
For folly, gallantry for every vice.
But slighted as it is, and by the great
Abandon'd, and, which still I more regret,
Infected with the manners and the modes
It knew not once, the country wins me still.
I never framed a wish, or form'd a plan
That flatter'd me with hopes of earthly bliss,
But there I laid the scene. There early stray'd
My fancy, ere yet liberty of choice
Had found me, or the hope of being free.
My very dreams were rural, rural too
The first-born efforts of my youthful muse,
Sportive, and jingling her poetic bells
Ere yet her ear was mistress of their powers.
No bard could please me but whose lyre was tuned
To Nature's praises. Heroes and their feats
Fatigued me, never weary of the pipe
Of Tityrus, assembling as he sang
The rustic throng beneath his favourite beech.
Then Milton had indeed a poet's charms.
New to my taste, his Paradise surpass'd
The struggling efforts of my boyish tongue
To speak its excellence; I danced for joy.
I marvel'd much that at so ripe an age
As twice seven years, his beauties had then first
Engaged my wonder, and admiring still
And still admiring, with regret supposed

The joy half lost because not sooner found.
Thee too enamour'd of the life I loved,
Pathetic in its praise, in its pursuit
Determined, and possessing it at last
With transports such as favour'd lovers feel,
I studied, prized, and wish'd that I had known,
Ingenious Cowley[28]! and though now, reclaim'd
By modern lights from an erroneous taste,
I cannot but lament thy splendid wit
Entangled in the cobwebs of the schools,
I still revere thee, courtly though retired,
Though stretch'd at ease in Chertsey's silent bowers
Not unemploy'd, and finding rich amends
For a lost world in solitude and verse.
'Tis born with all. The love of Nature's works
Is an ingredient in the compound, man,
Infused at the creation of the kind.
And though the Almighty Maker has throughout
Discriminated each from each, by strokes
And touches of his hand with so much art
Diversified, that two were never found
Twins at all points,—yet this obtains in all,
That all discern a beauty in his works
And all can taste them. Minds that have been form'd
And tutor'd, with a relish more exact,
But none without some relish, none unmoved.
It is a flame that dies not even there

[28] I seem through consecrated walks to rove,
I hear soft music die along the grove;
Here his first lays majestic Denham sung,
There the last numbers flowed from Cowley's tongue.
Pope. Windsor Forest.

Where nothing feeds it. Neither business, crowds,
Nor habits of luxurious city life,
Whatever else they smother of true worth
In human bosoms, quench it or abate.
The villas with which London stands begirt
Like a swarth Indian with his belt of beads,
Prove it. A breath of unadulterate air,
The glimpse of a green pasture, how they cheer
The citizen, and brace his languid frame!
Even in the stifling bosom of the town,
A garden in which nothing thrives, has charms
That soothe the rich possessor; much consoled
That here and there some sprigs of mournful mint,
Of nightshade or valerian, grace the well
He cultivates. These serve him with a hint
That Nature lives, that sight-refreshing green
Is still the livery she delights to wear,
Though sickly samples of the exuberant whole.
What are the casements lined with creeping herbs,
The prouder sashes fronted with a range
Of orange, myrtle, or the fragrant weed
The Frenchman's darling[29]? are they not all proofs
That man, immured in cities, still retains
His inborn inextinguishable thirst
Of rural scenes, compensating his loss
By supplemental shifts, the best he may?
The most unfurnished with the means of life,
And they that never pass their brick-wall bounds
To range the fields and treat their lungs with air,
Yet feel the burning instinct; over head
Suspend their crazy boxes planted thick

[29] Mignonette.

And water'd duly. There the pitcher stands
A fragment, and the spoutless tea-pot there;
Sad witnesses how close-pent man regrets
The country, with what ardour he contrives
A peep at nature, when he can no more.
Hail, therefore, patroness of health and ease
And contemplation, heart-consoling joys
And harmless pleasures, in the throng'd abode
Of multitudes unknown, hail rural life!
Address himself who will to the pursuit
Of honours or emolument or fame,
I shall not add myself to such a chace,
Thwart his attempts, or envy his success.
Some must be great. Great offices will have
Great talents. And God gives to every man
The virtue, temper, understanding, taste,
That lifts him into life, and lets him fall
Just in the niche he was ordain'd to fill.
To the deliverer of an injured land
He gives a tongue to enlarge upon, an heart
To feel, and courage to redress her wrongs;
To monarchs dignity, to judges sense,
To artists ingenuity and skill;
To me an unambitious mind, content
In the low vale of life, that early felt
A wish for ease and leisure, and ere long
Found here that leisure and that ease I wish'd.

THE TASK.

BOOK V.

ARGUMENT OF THE FIFTH BOOK.

A frosty morning. The foddering of cattle. The woodman and his dog. The poultry. Whimsical effects of frost at a waterfall. The Empress of Russia's palace of ice. Amusements of monarchs. War one of them. Wars, whence. And whence monarchy. The evils of it. English and French loyalty contrasted. The Bastile, and a prisoner there. Liberty the chief recommendation of this country. Modern patriotism questionable, and why. The perishable nature of the best human institutions. Spiritual liberty not perishable. The slavish state of man by nature. Deliver him, Deist, if you can. Grace must do it. The respective merits of patriots and martyrs stated. Their different treatment. Happy freedom of the man whom grace makes free. His relish of the works of God. Address to the Creator.

THE TASK.

BOOK V.

THE WINTER MORNING WALK.

'Tis morning; and the sun with ruddy orb
Ascending fires the horizon: while the clouds
That crowd away before the driving wind,
More ardent as the disk emerges more,
Resemble most some city in a blaze,
Seen through the leafless wood. His slanting ray
Slides ineffectual down the snowy vale[1],
And tinging all with his own rosy hue,
From every herb and every spiry blade
Stretches a length of shadow o'er the field.
Mine, spindling into longitude immense,
In spite of gravity and sage remark
That I myself am but a fleeting shade,
Provokes me to a smile. With eye askance
I view the muscular proportioned limb
Transformed to a lean shank. The shapeless pair
As they designed to mock me, at my side
Take step for step, and as I near approach
The cottage, walk along the plaster'd wall,
Preposterous sight! the legs without the man.

[1] The glow-worm shews the matin to be near,
And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire. *Hamlet*, i. 5.

The verdure of the plain lies buried deep
Beneath the dazzling deluge; and the bents
And coarser grass upspearing o'er the rest,
Of late unsightly and unseen, now shine
Conspicuous, and in bright apparel clad
And fledged with icy feathers, nod superb.
The cattle mourn in corners where the fence
Screens them, and seem half petrified to sleep
In unrecumbent sadness. There they wait
Their wonted fodder, not like hungering man
Fretful if unsupplied, but silent, meek,
And patient of the slow-paced swain's delay.
He from the stack carves out the accustomed load,
Deep plunging and again deep plunging oft
His broad keen knife into the solid mass.
Smooth as a wall the upright remnant stands,
With such undeviating and even force
He severs it away: no needless care,
Lest storms should overset the leaning pile
Deciduous, or its own unbalanced weight.
Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcerned
The cheerful haunts of man, to wield the axe
And drive the wedge in yonder forest drear,
From morn to eve his solitary task.
Shaggy and lean and shrewd, with pointed ears
And tail cropp'd short, half lurcher and half cur
His dog attends him. Close behind his heel
Now creeps he slow, and now with many a frisk
Wide-scampering snatches up the drifted snow
With ivory teeth, or ploughs it with his snout;
Then shakes his powder'd coat and barks for joy.
Heedless of all his pranks the sturdy churl

Moves right toward the mark; nor stops for aught,
But now and then with pressure of his thumb
To adjust the fragrant charge of a short tube
That fumes beneath his nose: the trailing cloud
Streams far behind him, scenting all the air.
Now from the roost or from the neighbouring pale,
Where diligent to catch the first faint gleam
Of smiling day, they gossipp'd side by side,
Come trooping at the housewife's well-known call
The feather'd tribes domestic. Half on wing
And half on foot, they brush the fleecy flood
Conscious, and fearful of too deep a plunge.
The sparrows peep, and quit the sheltering eaves
To seize the fair occasion. Well they eye
The scatter'd grain, and thievishly resolved
To escape the impending famine, often scared
As oft return, a pert voracious kind.
Clean riddance quickly made, one only care
Remains to each, the search of sunny nook,
Or shed impervious to the blast. Resign'd
To sad necessity the cock[2] foregoes
His wonted strut, and wading at their head
With well-considered steps, seems to resent
His alter'd gait and stateliness retrenched.
How find the myriads that in summer cheer[3]

[2] While the cock to the barn door
Stoutly struts his dames before. *L'Allegro*, 49.

[3] Ilk hopping bird, wee, hapless thing
That in the merry months o' spring
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o'thee?
Where wilt thou cower thy chitt'ring wing
An' close thy e'e? *Burns.*

The hills and vallies with their ceaseless songs
Due sustenance, or where subsist they now?
Earth yields them nought: the imprison'd worm is safe
Beneath the frozen clod; all seeds of herbs
Lie covered close, and berry-bearing thorns
That feed the thrush, (whatever some suppose,)
Afford the smaller minstrels no supply.
The long protracted rigour of the year
Thins all their numerous flocks. In chinks and holes
Ten thousand seek an unmolested end
As instinct prompts, self buried ere they die.
The very rooks and daws forsake the fields,
Where neither grub nor root nor earth-nut now
Repays their labour more; and perch'd aloft
By the way-side, or stalking in the path,
Lean pensioners upon the traveller's track,
Pick up their nauseous dole, though sweet to them,
Of voided pulse or half digested grain.
The streams are lost amid the splendid blank
O'erwhelming all distinction. On the flood
Indurated and fixt, the snowy weight
Lies undissolved, while silently beneath
And unperceived the current steals away.
Not so, where scornful of a check it leaps
The mill-dam, dashes on the restless wheel,
And wantons in the pebbly gulf below.
No frost can bind it there. Its utmost force
Can but arrest the light and smoky mist
That in its fall the liquid sheet throws wide.
And see where it has hung the embroidered banks
With forms so various, that no powers of art,
The pencil or the pen, may trace the scene!

Here glittering turrets rise, upbearing high
(Fantastic misarrangement,) on the roof
Large growth of what may seem the sparkling trees
And shrubs of fairy land. The chrystal drops
That trickle down the branches, fast congeal'd
Shoot into pillars of pellucid length,
And prop the pile they but adorned before.
Here grotto within grotto safe defies
The sun-beam. There emboss'd and fretted wild
The growing wonder takes a thousand shapes
Capricious, in which fancy seeks in vain
The likeness of some object seen before.
Thus nature works as if to mock at art[4],
And in defiance of her rival powers;
By these fortuitous and random strokes
Performing such inimitable feats
As she with all her rules can never reach.
Less worthy of applause though more admired,
Because a novelty, the work of man,
Imperial mistress of the fur-clad Russ!
Thy most magnificent and mighty freak,

[4] 'Twas nature's will; who sometimes undertakes,
For the reproof of human vanity,
Art to outstrip in her peculiar walk.
Excursion, p. 263.

The pillar'd vestibule,
Expanding yet precise, the roof
Might seem design'd to humble man, when proud
Of his best workmanship by plan and tool.
Wordsworth. Second Sonn. on Staffa.

The sport of nature, aided by blind chance
Rudely to mock the works of toiling man.
Excursion, p. 101.

The wonder of the north. No forest fell
When thou would'st build; no quarry sent its stores
To enrich thy walls: but thou didst hew the floods,
And make thy marble of the glassy wave.
In such a palace Aristæus found
Cyrene, when he bore the plaintive tale
Of his lost bees to her maternal ear.
In such a palace poetry might place
The armoury of Winter, where his troops
The gloomy clouds find weapons, arrowy sleet[5]
Skin-piercing volley, blossom-bruising hail,
And snow that often blinds the traveller's course,
And wraps him in an unexpected tomb.
Silently as a dream the fabric rose.
No sound of hammer or of saw was there[6].
Ice upon ice, the well-adjusted parts
Were soon conjoined, nor other cement ask'd
Than water interfused to make them one.
Lamps gracefully disposed and of all hues
Illumined every side. A watery light
Gleamed through the clear transparency, that seemed
Another moon new-risen[7], or meteor fallen
From heaven to earth, of lambent flame serene.
So stood the brittle prodigy, though smooth
And slippery the materials, yet frost-bound
Firm as a rock. Nor wanted aught within

[5] Sharp sleet of arrowy showers. *Par. Reg.* iii. 324.
Iron sleet of arrowy shower. *Gray.*

[6] There was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building. 1 *Kings*, vi. 7.

[7] As when the sun new risen. *Par. Lost*, i. 594.

That royal residence might well befit,
For grandeur or for use. Long wavy wreaths
Of flowers that feared no enemy but warmth,
Blushed on the pannels. Mirror needed none
Where all was vitreous, but in order due
Convivial table and commodious seat
(What seemed at least commodious seat,) were there,
Sofa and couch and high-built throne august[8].
The same lubricity was found in all,
And all was moist to the warm touch, a scene
Of evanescent glory, once a stream,
And soon to slide into a stream again.
Alas! 'twas but a mortifying stroke
Of undesigned severity, that glanced
(Made by a monarch,) on her own estate,
On human grandeur and the courts of kings.
'Twas transient in its nature, as in show
'Twas durable. As worthless as it seemed
Intrinsically precious: to the foot
Treacherous and false, it smiled and it was cold.
Great princes have great playthings. Some have played
At hewing mountains into men, and some
At building human wonders mountain-high.
Some have amused the dull sad years of life,
Life spent in indolence, and therefore sad,
With schemes of monumental fame, and sought

[8] See Kircher's description of the Grotto of Antiparos, in Goldsmith's Nat. vol. i. c. 8.

In several places magnificent columns, thrones, altars, and other objects appeared, as if nature had designed to mock the curiosities of art. &c.

By pyramids and mausolean pomp,
Short-lived themselves, to immortalize their bones.
Some seek diversion in the tented field,
And make the sorrows of mankind their sport.
But war's a game, which were their subjects wise,
Kings should not play at. Nations would do well
To extort their truncheons from the puny hands
Of heroes, whose infirm and baby minds
Are gratified with mischief, and who spoil
Because men suffer it, their toy the world.
When Babel was confounded, and the great
Confederacy of projectors wild and vain
Was split into diversity of tongues,
Then, as a shepherd separates his flock,
These to the upland, to the valley those[9],
God drave asunder and assigned their lot
To all the nations. Ample was the boon
He gave them, in its distribution fair
And equal, and he bade them dwell in peace.
Peace was awhile their care. They plough'd and sow'd
And reap'd their plenty without grudge or strife.
But violence can never longer sleep
Than human passions please. In every heart
Are sown the sparks that kindle fiery war,
Occasion needs but fan them, and they blaze.
Cain had already shed a brother's blood;
The deluge wash'd it out; but left unquenched
The seeds of murder in the breast of man.
Soon, by a righteous judgement, in the line

[9] They to their grassy couch, these to their nests.
Par. Lost, iv. 601.

Of his descending progeny was found
The first artificer of death; the shrewd
Contriver who first sweated at the forge,
And forced the blunt and yet unblooded steel
To a keen edge, and made it bright for war.
Him Tubal named, the Vulcan of old times,
The sword and falchion their inventor claim,
And the first smith was the first murderer's son.
His art survived the waters; and ere long
When man was multiplied and spread abroad
In tribes and clans, and had begun to call
These meadows and that range of hills his own,
The tasted sweets of property begat
Desire of more; and industry in some
To improve and cultivate their just demesne,
Made others covet what they saw so fair.
Thus wars began on earth. These fought for spoil,
And those in self-defence. Savage at first
The onset, and irregular. At length
One eminent above the rest, for strength,
For stratagem or courage, or for all,
Was chosen leader. Him they served in war,
And him in peace for sake of warlike deeds
Reverenced no less. Who could with him compare?
Or who so worthy to controul themselves
As he whose prowess had subdued their foes?
Thus war affording field for the display
Of virtue, made one chief, whom times of peace[10],
Which have their exigencies too, and call

[10] Peace hath her victories
No less renowned than war. *Milton. Sonnet* xvi.

For skill in government, at length made king.
King was a name too proud for man to wear
With modesty and weakness; and the crown,
So dazzling in their eyes who set it on,
Was sure to intoxicate the brows it bound.
It is the abject property of most,
That being parcel of the common mass,
And destitute of means to raise themselves,
They sink and settle lower than they need.
They know not what it is to feel within
A comprehensive faculty that grasps
Great purposes with ease, that turns and wields,
Almost without an effort, plans too vast
For their conception, which they cannot move.
Conscious of impotence they soon grow drunk
With gazing, when they see an able man
Step forth to notice; and besotted thus
Build him a pedestal, and say, Stand there,
And be our admiration and our praise!
They roll themselves before him in the dust,
Then most deserving in their own account
When most extravagant in his applause,
As if exalting him they raised themselves.
Thus by degrees self-cheated of their sound
And sober judgement that he is but man,
They demi-deify and fume him so
That in due season he forgets it too.
Inflated and astrut with self-conceit
He gulps the windy diet, and ere long
Adopting their mistake, profoundly thinks
The world was made in vain if not for him.
Thenceforth they are his cattle: drudges born

To bear his burthens, drawing in his gears
And sweating in his service. His caprice
Becomes the soul that animates them all.
He deems a thousand or ten thousand lives
Spent in the purchase of renown for him
An easy reckoning, and they think the same.
Thus kings were first invented, and thus kings
Were burnished[11] into heroes, and became
The arbiters of this terraqueous swamp,
Storks among frogs, that have but croak'd and died.
Strange that such folly as lifts bloated man
To eminence fit only for a God,
Should ever drivel out of human lips
Even in the cradled weakness of the world!
Still stranger much, that when at length mankind
Had reached the sinewy firmness of their youth,
And could discriminate and argue well
On subjects more mysterious, they were yet
Babes in the cause of freedom, and should fear
And quake before the Gods themselves had made.
But above measure strange, that neither proof
Of sad experience, nor examples set
By some whose patriot virtue has prevailed,
Can even now, when they are grown mature
In wisdom, and with philosophic deeps
Familiar, serve to emancipate the rest!

[11] Pursuit of fame with pedants fills our schools,
And into coxcombs burnishes our fools.
Young. Satire vii.

Some are bewildered in the maze of school,
And some made coxcombs nature meant but fools.
Pope. Essay on Crit. 26.

Such dupes are men to custom, and so prone
To reverence what is ancient and can plead
A course of long observance for its use,
That even servitude, the worst of ills,
Because deliver'd down from sire to son,
Is kept and guarded as a sacred thing.
But is it fit, or can it bear the shock
Of rational discussion, that a man,
Compounded and made up like other men
Of elements tumultuous, in whom lust
And folly in as ample measure meet
As in the bosoms of the slaves he rules,
Should be a despot absolute, and boast
Himself the only freeman of his land?
Should when he pleases, and on whom he will,
Wage war, with any or with no pretence
Of provocation given or wrong sustained,
And force the beggarly last doit, by means
That his own humour dictates, from the clutch
Of poverty, that thus he may procure
His thousands, weary of penurious life,
A splendid opportunity to die?
Say ye, who (with less prudence than of old
Jotham ascribed to his assembled trees
In politic convention,) put your trust
In the shadow of a bramble, and reclined
In fancied peace beneath his dangerous branch,
Rejoice in him and celebrate his sway,
Where find ye passive fortitude? Whence springs
Your self-denying zeal that holds it good
To stroke the prickly grievance, and to hang
His thorns with streamers of continual praise?

We too are friends to loyalty. We love
The king who loves the law, respects his bounds,
And reigns content within them. Him we serve
Freely and with delight, who leaves us free.
But recollecting still that he is man,
We trust him not too far. King though he be,
And king in England too, he may be weak
And vain enough to be ambitious still,
May exercise amiss his proper powers,
Or covet more than freemen choose to grant:
Beyond that mark is treason. He is ours,
To administer, to guard, to adorn the state,
But not to warp or change it. We are his,
To serve him nobly in the common cause
True to the death, but not to be his slaves.
Mark now the difference, ye that boast your love
Of kings, between your loyalty and ours.
We love the man; the paltry pageant you.
We the chief patron of the commonwealth;
You the regardless author of its woes.
We for the sake of liberty, a king;
You chains and bondage for a tyrant's sake.
Our love is principle, and has its root
In reason, is judicious, manly, free;
Yours, a blind instinct, crouches to the rod,
And licks the foot that treads it in the dust.
Were kingship [12] as true treasure as it seems,
Sterling, and worthy of a wise man's wish,
I would not be a king to be beloved
Causeless, and daub'd with undiscerning praise,

[12] If this be kingly, then farewell for me
All kingship, and may I live poor and free. *Tub. Talk.*

Where love is mere attachment to the throne,
Not to the man who fills it as he ought.
Whose freedom is by sufferance, and at will
Of a superior, he is never free.
Who lives, and is not weary of a life
Exposed to manacles, deserves them well.
The state that strives for liberty, though foiled
And forced to abandon what she bravely sought,
Deserves at least applause for her attempt,
And pity for her loss. But that's a cause
Not often unsuccessful; power usurp'd
Is weakness when opposed; conscious of wrong
'Tis pusillanimous and prone to flight.
But slaves that once conceive the glowing thought
Of freedom, in that hope itself possess
All that the contest calls for; spirit, strength,
The scorn of danger, and united hearts
The surest presage of the good they seek[13].
Then shame to manhood, and opprobrious more
To France, than all her losses and defeats
Old or of later date, by sea or land,
Her house of bondage worse than that of old
Which God avenged on Pharaoh,—the Bastile.
Ye horrid towers, the abode of broken hearts,
Ye dungeons and ye cages of despair,
That monarchs have supplied from age to age
With music such as suits their sovereign ears,

[13] The author hopes that he shall not be censured for unnecessary warmth upon so interesting a subject. He is aware that it is become almost fashionable to stigmatize such sentiments as no better than empty declamation. But it is an ill symptom, and peculiar to modern times.

The sighs and groans of miserable men!
There's not an English heart that would not leap
To hear that ye were fallen at last, to know
That even our enemies, so oft employed
In forging chains for us, themselves were free.
For he that values liberty, confines
His zeal for her predominance within
No narrow bounds; her cause engages him
Wherever pleaded. 'Tis the cause of man.
There dwell the most forlorn of human kind,
Immured though unaccused, condemn'd untried,
Cruelly spared, and hopeless of escape.
There like the visionary emblem seen
By him of Babylon, life stands a stump,
And filletted about with hoops of brass,
Still lives, though all its pleasant boughs are gone.
To count the hour-bell and expect no change;
And ever as the sullen sound is heard,
Still to reflect that though a joyless note
To him whose moments all have one dull pace,
Ten thousand rovers in the world at large
Account it music; that it summons some
To theatre or jocund feast or ball;
The wearied hireling finds it a release
From labour; and the lover that has chid
Its long delay, feels every welcome stroke
Upon his heart-strings trembling with delight:—
To fly for refuge from distracting thought
To such amusements as ingenious woe
Contrives, hard-shifting and without her tools;—
To read engraven on the mouldy walls,
In staggering types, his predecessor's tale,

A sad memorial, and subjoin his own :—
To turn purveyor to an overgorged
And bloated spider[14], till the pamper'd pest
Is made familiar, watches his approach,
Comes at his call, and serves him for a friend:—
To wear out time in numbering to and fro
The studs that thick emboss his iron door,
Then downward and then upward, then aslant
And then alternate, with a sickly hope
By dint of change to give his tasteless task
Some relish, till the sum exactly found
In all directions, he begins again :—
Oh comfortless existence! hemm'd around
With woes, which who that suffers, would not kneel
And beg for exile, or the pangs of death?
That man should thus encroach on fellow man[15],

[14] With spiders I had friendship made,
And watch'd them in their sullen trade, &c.
Byron. Prisoner of Chillon.

[15] And this place our forefathers made for man,
This is the process of our love and wisdom
To each poor brother who offends against us,
Most innocent, perhaps—and what if guilty?
Is this the only cure? Merciful God!
Each pure and natural outlet shrivelled up
By ignorance and parching poverty,
His energies roll back upon his heart,
And stagnate and corrupt; till changed to poison,
They break out on him, like a loathsome plague spot.
Then we call in our pampered mountebanks—
And this is their best cure! uncomforted
And friendless solitude, groaning and tears,
And savage faces, at the clanking hour,
Seen through the steams and vapour of his dungeon,

Abridge him of his just and native rights,
Eradicate him, tear him from his hold
Upon the endearments of domestic life
And social, nip his fruitfulness and use,
And doom him for perhaps an heedless word
To barrenness and solitude and tears,
Moves indignation; makes the name of king,
(Of king whom such prerogative can please,)
As dreadful as the Manichean God,
Adored through fear, strong only to destroy.
'Tis liberty alone that gives the flower
Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume,
And we are weeds without it. All constraint,
Except what wisdom lays on evil men,
Is evil; hurts the faculties, impedes
Their progress in the road of science; blinds
The eyesight of discovery, and begets
In those that suffer it, a sordid mind
Bestial, a meagre intellect, unfit
To be the tenant of man's noble form.
Thee therefore still, blame-worthy as thou art,
With all thy loss of empire, and though squeezed
By public exigence till annual food
Fails for the craving hunger of the state,
Thee I account still happy, and the chief
Among the nations, seeing thou art free!
My native nook of earth! Thy clime is rude,

> By the lamp's dismal twilight! so he lies
> Circled with evil, till his very soul
> Unmoulds its essence, hopelessly deformed
> By sights of evermore deformity.
>
> *Coleridge. Remorse.*

Replete with vapours, and disposes much
All hearts to sadness, and none more than mine;
Thine unadulterate manners are less soft
And plausible than social life requires,
And thou hast need of discipline and art
To give thee what politer France receives
From Nature's bounty,—that humane address
And sweetness, without which no pleasure is
In converse, either starved by cold reserve,
Or flush'd with fierce dispute, a senseless brawl;
Yet being free, I love thee. For the sake
Of that one feature, can be well content,
Disgraced as thou hast been, poor as thou art,
To seek no sublunary rest beside.
But once enslaved, farewell! I could endure
Chains no where patiently, and chains at home
Where I am free by birthright, not at all.
Then what were left of roughness in the grain
Of British natures, wanting its excuse
That it belongs to freemen, would disgust
And shock me. I should then with double pain
Feel all the rigour of thy fickle clime;
And if I must bewail the blessing lost
For which our Hampdens and our Sidneys bled,
I would at least bewail it under skies
Milder, among a people less austere,
In scenes which, having never known me free,
Would not reproach me with the loss I felt.
Do I forebode impossible events,
And tremble at vain dreams? Heaven grant I may!
But the age of virtuous politics is past,
And we are deep in that of cold pretence.

Patriots are grown too shrewd to be sincere,
And we too wise to trust them. He that takes
Deep in his soft credulity the stamp
Designed by loud declaimers on the part
Of liberty, themselves the slaves of lust,
Incurs derision for his easy faith
And lack of knowledge, and with cause enough.
For when was public virtue to be found
Where private was not? Can he love the whole
Who loves no part? he be a nation's friend
Who is in truth the friend of no man there?
Can he be strenuous in his country's cause,
Who slights the charities for whose dear sake
That country, if at all, must be beloved?
'Tis therefore, sober and good men are sad
For England's glory, seeing it wax pale
And sickly, while her champions wear their hearts
So loose to private duty, that no brain,
Healthful and undisturb'd by factious fumes,
Can dream them trusty to the general weal.
Such were not they of old, whose temper'd blades
Dispersed the shackles of usurp'd controul,
And hew'd them link from link. Then Albion's sons
Were sons indeed. They felt a filial heart
Beat high within them at a mother's wrongs,
And shining each in his domestic sphere,
Shone brighter still once call'd to public view.
'Tis therefore, many whose sequester'd lot
Forbids their interference, looking on
Anticipate perforce some dire event;
And seeing the old castle of the state,
That promised once more firmness, so assail'd

That all its tempest-beaten turrets shake,
Stand motionless expectants of its fall.
All has its date below. The fatal hour
Was register'd in heaven ere time began.
We turn to dust, and all our mightiest works
Die too. The deep foundations that we lay,
Time ploughs them up, and not a trace remains.
We build with what we deem eternal rock;
A distant age asks where the fabric stood,
And in the dust, sifted and search'd in vain,
The undiscoverable secret sleeps.
  But there is yet a liberty unsung
By poets, and by senators unpraised,
Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the power
Of earth and hell confederate take away:
A liberty, which persecution, fraud,
Oppression, prisons, have no power to bind;
Which whoso tastes can be enslaved no more.
'Tis liberty of heart derived from heaven,
Bought with His blood who gave it to mankind,
And seal'd with the same token. It is held
By charter, and that charter sanction'd sure
By the unimpeachable and aweful oath
And promise of a God. His other gifts
All bear the royal stamp that speaks them his,
And are august, but this transcends them all.
His other works, this visible display
Of all-creating energy and might,
Are grand no doubt, and worthy of the Word
That finding an interminable space
Unoccupied, has filled the void so well,
And made so sparkling what was dark before.

But these are not his glory. Man, 'tis true,
Smit with the beauty of so fair a scene,
Might well suppose the artificer divine
Meant it eternal, had he not himself
Pronounced it transient, glorious as it is,
And still designing a more glorious far,
Doom'd it as insufficient for his praise.
These therefore are occasional and pass.
Form'd for the confutation of the fool
Whose lying heart disputes against a God,
That office served, they must be swept away.
Not so the labours of his love. They shine
In other heavens than these that we behold,
And fade not. There is paradise that fears
No forfeiture, and of its fruits he sends
Large prelibation oft to saints below.
Of these the first in order, and the pledge
And confident assurance of the rest,
Is liberty; a flight into His arms
Ere yet mortality's fine threads give way;
A clear escape from tyrannizing lust,
And full immunity from penal woe.
Chains are the portion of revolted man,
Stripes and a dungeon; and his body serves
The triple purpose. In that sickly, foul,
Opprobrious[16] residence, he finds them all.
Propense his heart to idols, he is held
In silly dotage on created things,
Careless of their Creator. And that low

[16] For their dwelling place
Accept this dark opprobrious den of shame.
Par. Lost, ii. 57.

And sordid gravitation of his powers
To a vile clod, so draws him with such force
Resistless from the centre he should seek,
That he at last forgets it. All his hopes
Tend downward; his ambition is to sink,
To reach a depth [17] profounder still, and still
Profounder, in the fathomless abyss
Of folly, plunging in pursuit of death.
But ere he gain the comfortless repose
He seeks, an acquiescence of his soul
In heaven-renouncing exile, he endures—
What does he not? from lusts opposed in vain,
And self-reproaching conscience. He foresees
The fatal issue to his health, fame, peace,
Fortune and dignity; the loss of all
That can ennoble man, and make frail life
Short as it is, supportable. Still worse,
Far worse than all the plagues with which his sins
Infect his happiest moments, he forebodes
Ages of hopeless misery; future death,
And death still future: not an hasty stroke
Like that which sends him to the dusty grave,
But unrepealable enduring death.
Scripture is still a trumpet to his fears;
What none can prove a forgery, may be true,
What none but bad men wish exploded, must.
That scruple checks him. Riot is not loud
Nor drunk enough to drown it. In the midst
Of laughter his compunctions are sincere,

[17] In the lowest deep a lower deep
Still threatening to devour me opens wide.
Par. Lost, iv. 76.

And he abhors the jest by which he shines.
Remorse begets reform. His master-lust
Falls first before his resolute rebuke,
And seems dethroned and vanquish'd. Peace ensues,
But spurious and short-lived, the puny child
Of self-congratulating Pride, begot
On fancied Innocence. Again he falls,
And fights again; but finds his best essay
A presage ominous, portending still
Its own dishonour by a worse relapse.
Till Nature, unavailing Nature foiled
So oft, and wearied in the vain attempt,
Scoffs at her own performance. Reason now
Takes part with Appetite, and pleads the cause,
Perversely, which of late she so condemn'd;
With shallow shifts and old devices, worn
And tatter'd in the service of debauch,
Covering his shame from his offended sight.
"Hath God indeed given appetites to man,
And stored the earth so plenteously with means
To gratify the hunger of his wish,
And doth he reprobate and will he damn
The use of his own bounty? making first
So frail a kind, and then enacting laws
So strict, that less than perfect must despair[16]?

[16] His other excellence they'll not dispute,
But mercy sure is his chief attribute.
Shall pleasures of a short duration chain
A lady's soul in everlasting pain?
Will the great Author us poor worms destroy
For now and then a sip of transient joy? &c.

Falsehood! which whoso but suspects of truth,
Dishonours God, and makes a slave of man.
Do they themselves, who undertake for hire
The teacher's office, and dispense at large
Their weekly dole of edifying strains,
Attend to their own music? have they faith
In what with such solemnity of tone
And gesture they propound to our belief?
Nay,—conduct hath the loudest tongue. The voice
Is but an instrument on which the priest
May play what tune he pleases. In the deed,
The unequivocal authentic deed,
We find sound argument, we read the heart."
Such reasonings (if that name must needs belong
To excuses in which reason has no part,)
Serve to compose a spirit well inclined[19]
To live on terms of amity with vice,
And sin without disturbance. Often urged
(As often as libidinous discourse
Exhausted, he resorts to solemn themes
Of theological and grave import,)
They gain at last his unreserved assent;
Till harden'd his heart's temper in the forge
Of lust, and on the anvil of despair,
He slights the strokes of conscience. Nothing moves,

Poor Satan doubtless will at length be saved,
Though once upon a time he misbehaved.
Young. Satire vi.

Let priests do something for their one in ten,
It is their trade; so far they're honest men, &c.

[19] *Fere libenter homines id quod volunt credunt.* Cæsar.

Or nothing much, his constancy in ill;
Vain tampering has but foster'd his disease,
'Tis desperate, and he sleeps the sleep of death.
Haste now, philosopher, and set him free!
Charm the deaf serpent wisely. Make him hear
Of rectitude and fitness; moral truth[20]
How lovely, and the moral sense how sure,
Consulted and obeyed, to guide his steps
Directly to the FIRST AND ONLY FAIR.
Spare not in such a cause. Spend all the powers
Of rant and rhapsody in virtue's praise,
Be most sublimely good, verbosely grand,
And with poetic trappings grace thy prose
Till it out-mantle all the pride of verse.—
Ah, tinkling cymbal and high-sounding brass
Smitten in vain! such music cannot charm
The eclipse that intercepts truth's heavenly beam,
And chills and darkens a wide-wandering soul.
The still small voice is wanted. He must speak
Whose word leaps forth at once to its effect,
Who calls for things that are not, and they come.
Grace makes the slave a freeman. 'Tis a change
That turns to ridicule the turgid speech
And stately tone of moralists, who boast,
As if, like him of fabulous renown,
They had indeed ability to smooth
The shag of savage nature, and were each
An Orpheus and omnipotent in song.
But transformation of apostate man

[20] Abashed the devil stood
And felt how aweful goodness is, and saw
Virtue in her shape how lovely. *Par. Lost*, iv. 846.

From fool to wise, from earthly to divine,
Is work for Him that made him. He alone,
And He by means in philosophic eyes
Trivial and worthy of disdain, achieves
The wonder; humanizing what is brute
In the lost kind, extracting from the lips
Of asps their venom, overpowering strength
By weakness, and hostility by love.
Patriots have toiled, and in their country's cause
Bled nobly[21], and their deeds, as they deserve,
Receive proud recompense. We give in charge
Their names to the sweet lyre. The historic Muse,
Proud of the treasure, marches with it down
To latest times; and Sculpture, in her turn,
Gives bond in stone and ever-during brass,
To guard them, and to immortalize her trust.
But fairer wreaths are due, though never paid,
To those who posted at the shrine of truth,
Have fallen in her defence. A patriot's blood

[21] Ungrateful country, if thou e'er forget
The sons who for thy civil rights have bled!
How, like a Roman, Sidney bowed his head,
And Russel's milder blood the scaffold wet:
But these had fallen for profitless regret
Had not thy holy church her champions bred,
And claims from other worlds inspirited
The star of liberty to rise. Nor yet
(Grave this within thy heart!) if spiritual things
Be lost, through apathy, or scorn, or fear,
Shalt thou thy humbler franchises support
However hardly won, or justly dear;
What came from Heaven, to Heaven by nature clings,
And if dissevered thence its course is short.
Wordsworth. Ecc. Sketches. Sonnet ix. part 3.

Well spent in such a strife may earn indeed,
And for a time insure to his loved land
The sweets of liberty and equal laws;
But martyrs[22] struggle for a brighter prize,
And win it with more pain. Their blood is shed
In confirmation of the noblest claim,
Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,
To walk with God, to be divinely free,
To soar, and to anticipate the skies.
Yet few remember them. They lived unknown
Till persecution dragg'd them into fame
And chased them up to heaven. Their ashes flew
—No marble tells us whither. With their names
No bard embalms and sanctifies his song;
And history[23], so warm on meaner themes,
Is cold on this. She execrates indeed
The tyranny that doom'd them to the fire,
But gives the glorious sufferers little praise[24].
He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside. There's not a chain
That hellish foes confederate for his harm
Can wind around him, but he casts it off
With as much ease as Samson his green withes.

[22] Wars, hitherto the only argument
Heroic deem'd;—the better fortitude
Of patience and heroic martyrdom
Unsung. *Par. Lost*, ix. 28.

[23] Thus fame shall be achieved, renown on earth,
And what most merits fame in silence hid.
Par. Lost, ix. 698.

[24] See Hume.

He looks abroad into the varied field[25]
Of Nature, and though poor perhaps, compared
With those whose mansions glitter in his sight,
Calls the delightful scenery all his own.
His are the mountains, and the valleys his,
And the resplendent rivers; his to enjoy
With a propriety that none can feel,
But who with filial confidence inspired
Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
And smiling say—my Father made them all.
Are they not his by a peculiar right,
And by an emphasis of interest his,
Whose eye they fill with tears of holy joy,
Whose heart with praise, and whose exalted mind
With worthy thoughts of that unwearied love
That plann'd, and built, and still upholds a world

[25] What though not all
Of mortal offspring can attain the heights
Of envied life; though only few possess
Patrician treasures or imperial state;
Yet Nature's care, to all her children just,
With richer treasures and an ampler state
Endows at large whatever happy man
Will deign to use them. His the city's pomp,
The rural honours his. Whate'er adorns
The princely dome, the column, and the arch
The breathing marbles, and the sculptured gold
Beyond the proud possessor's narrow claim,
His tuneful breast enjoys, &c.
Akenside. Pleas. of Imag. iii. 574.

These Nature's commoners who want a home,
Claim the wide world for their majestic dome.
Young. First Essay to Pope.

So clothed with beauty, for rebellious man?
Yes—ye may fill your garners, ye that reap
The loaded soil, and ye may waste much good
In senseless riot; but ye will not find
In feast or in the chase, in song or dance,
A liberty like his, who unimpeach'd
Of usurpation and to no man's wrong,
Appropriates nature as his Father's work,
And has a richer use of yours, than ye.
He is indeed a freeman: free by birth
Of no mean city, plann'd or ere the hills
Were built, the fountains open'd, or the sea
With all his roaring multitude of waves.
His freedom is the same in every state;
And no condition of this changeful life
So manifold in cares, whose every day
Brings its own evil with it, makes it less.
For he has wings that neither sickness, pain,
Nor penury, can cripple or confine.
No nook so narrow but he spreads them there
With ease, and is at large. The oppressor holds
His body bound, but knows not what a range
His spirit takes unconscious of a chain,
And that to bind him is a vain attempt
Whom God delights in, and in whom he dwells.
Acquaint thyself with God if thou wouldst taste
His works. Admitted once to his embrace,
Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before;
Thine eye shall be instructed, and thine heart
Made pure, shall relish with divine delight
Till then unfelt, what hands divine have wrought.
Brutes graze the mountain-top with faces prone

And eyes intent upon the scanty herb
It yields them; or recumbent on its brow,
Ruminate heedless of the scene outspread
Beneath, beyond, and stretching far away
From inland regions to the distant main.
Man views it and admires, but rests content
With what he views. The landscape has his praise,
But not its Author[26]. Unconcern'd who form'd
The paradise he sees, he finds it such,
And such well-pleased to find it, asks no more.
Not so the mind that has been touch'd from heaven,
And in the school of sacred wisdom taught
To read His wonders, in whose thought the world,
Fair as it is, existed ere it was.
Not for its own sake merely, but for His
Much more who fashioned it, he gives it praise;
Praise that from earth resulting as it ought
To earth's acknowledged sovereign, finds at once
Its only just proprietor in Him.
The soul that sees him, or receives sublimed
New faculties, or learns at least to employ
More worthily the powers she own'd before;
Discerns in all things, what with stupid gaze[27]
Of ignorance till then she overlook'd,
A ray of heavenly light gilding all forms
Terrestrial, in the vast and the minute
The unambiguous footsteps of the God

[26] See nature in some partial narrow shape,
And let the Author of the whole escape.
Dunciad, iv. 455.

[27] But wandering oft with brute unconscious gaze
Man marks not Thee. *Thomson. Hymn*, 28.

Who gives its lustre to an insect's wing,
And wheels his throne upon the rolling worlds.
Much conversant with heaven, she often holds
With those fair ministers of light to man
That fill the skies nightly with silent pomp,
Sweet conference; enquires what strains were they
With which heaven rang, when every star, in haste
To gratulate the new-created earth,
Sent forth a voice, and all the sons of God
Shouted for joy.—"Tell me, ye shining hosts
That navigate a sea that knows no storms
Beneath a vault unsullied with a cloud[28],
If from your elevation, whence ye view
Distinctly scenes invisible to man,
And systems of whose birth no tidings yet
Have reach'd this nether world[29], ye spy a race
Favour'd as ours, transgressors from the womb
And hasting to a grave, yet doom'd to rise,
And to possess a brighter heaven than yours?
As one who long detain'd on foreign shores
Pants to return, and when he sees afar
His country's weather-bleach'd and batter'd rocks
From the green wave emerging, darts an eye
Radiant with joy towards the happy land;
So I with animated hopes behold
And many an aching wish, your beamy fires,
That show like beacons in the blue abyss

[28] And lights on lids unsullied with a tear. *Young.*

[29] Fields of radiance whose unfaded light
Has travelled the profound six thousand years,
Nor yet arrives in sight of mortal things.
Akenside. Pleas. of Imag. i. 204.

Ordain'd to guide the embodied spirit home
From toilsome life to never ending rest.
Love kindles as I gaze. I feel desires
That give assurance of their own success,
And that infused from heaven, must thither tend."
So reads he nature whom the lamp of truth
Illuminates. Thy lamp, mysterious Word!
Which whoso sees, no longer wanders lost
With intellects bemazed in endless doubt,
But runs the road of wisdom. Thou hast built,
With means that were not till by thee employ'd,
Worlds that had never been hadst thou in strength
Been less, or less benevolent than strong.
They are thy witnesses, who speak thy power
And goodness infinite, but speak in ears
That hear not, or receive not their report.
In vain thy creatures testify of thee
Till thou proclaim thyself. Theirs is indeed
A teaching voice; but 'tis the praise of thine
That whom it teaches it makes prompt to learn,
And with the boon gives talents for its use.
Till Thou art heard, imaginations vain
Possess the heart, and fables false as hell,
Yet deem'd oracular, lure down to death
The uninform'd and heedless souls of men.
We give to Chance, blind Chance, ourselves as blind,
The glory of thy work, which yet appears
Perfect and unimpeachable of blame,
Challenging human scrutiny, and proved
Then skilful most when most severely judged.
But Chance is not; or is not where thou reign'st:
Thy Providence forbids that fickle power

(If power she be that works but to confound,)
To mix her wild vagaries with thy laws.
Yet thus we dote, refusing while we can
Instruction, and inventing to ourselves
Gods such as guilt makes welcome, Gods that sleep,
Or disregard our follies, or that sit
Amused spectators of this bustling stage.
Thee we reject, unable to abide
Thy purity, till pure as thou art pure,
Made such by thee, we love thee for that cause
For which we shunn'd and hated thee before.
Then we are free: then liberty like day
Breaks on the soul, and by a flash from heaven
Fires all the faculties with glorious joy.
A voice is heard that mortal ears hear not
Till thou hast touch'd them; 'tis the voice of song,
A loud Hosanna sent from all thy works,
Which he that hears it with a shout repeats,
And adds his rapture to the general praise.
In that blest moment, Nature throwing wide
Her vale opaque, discloses with a smile
The Author of her beauties, who retired
Behind his own creation, works unseen
By the impure, and hears his power denied.
Thou art the source and centre of all minds,
Their only point of rest, eternal Word!
From thee departing, they are lost and rove[30]
At random, without honour, hope, or peace.
From thee is all that sooths the life of man,

[30] With thee conversing, I forget all time.
Par. Lost, iv. 639.

His high endeavour, and his glad success,
His strength to suffer, and his will to serve.
But oh thou bounteous Giver of all good,
Thou art of all thy gifts thyself the crown!
Give what thou canst, without thee we are poor,
And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away.

THE TASK.

BOOK VI.

ARGUMENT OF THE SIXTH BOOK.

Bells at a distance. Their effect. A fine noon in winter. A sheltered walk. Meditation better than books. Our familiarity with the course of nature makes it appear less wonderful than it is. The transformation that spring effects in a shrubbery described. A mistake concerning the course of nature corrected. God maintains it by an unremitted act. The amusements fashionable at this hour of the day reproved. Animals happy, a delightful sight. Origin of cruelty to animals. That it is a great crime proved from Scripture. That proof illustrated by a tale. A line drawn between the lawful and the unlawful destruction of them. Their good and useful properties insisted on. Apology for the encomiums bestowed by the author on animals. Instances of man's extravagant praise of man. The groans of the creation shall have an end. A view taken of the restoration of all things. An Invocation and an Invitation of him who shall bring it to pass. The retired man vindicated from the charge of uselessness. Conclusion.

THE TASK.

BOOK VI.

THE WINTER WALK AT NOON.

THERE is in souls a sympathy with sounds,
And as the mind is pitch'd the ear is pleased
With melting airs or martial, brisk or grave.
Some chord in unison with what we hear
Is touch'd within us, and the heart replies.
How soft the music of those village bells
Falling at intervals upon the ear
In cadence sweet! now dying all away,
Now pealing loud again and louder still,
Clear and sonorous as the gale comes on.
With easy force it opens all the cells
Where memory slept[1]. Wherever I have heard

[1] How sweet the tuneful bells' responsive peal!
As when at opening morn, the fragrant breeze
Breathes on the trembling sense of wan disease,
So piercing to my heart their force I feel.
And hark! with lessening cadence now they fall;
And now along the white and level tide
They fling the melancholy music wide;
Bidding me many a tender thought recall
Of summer days, and those delightful years
When by my native streams, on life's fair prime,
The mournful magic of their mingling chime
First waked my wondering childhood into tears!

A kindred melody, the scene recurs,
And with it all its pleasures and its pains.
Such comprehensive views the spirit takes,
That in a few short moments I retrace
(As in a map the voyager his course,)
The windings of my way through many years.
Short as in retrospect the journey seems,
It seem'd not always short; the rugged path
And prospect oft so dreary and forlorn
Moved many a sigh at its disheartening length.
Yet feeling present evils, while the past
Faintly impress the mind, or not at all,
How readily we wish time spent revoked,
That we might try the ground again, where once
(Through inexperience as we now perceive,)
We miss'd that happiness we might have found.
Some friend is gone, perhaps his son's best friend
A father, whose authority, in show
When most severe[2], and mustering all its force,
Was but the graver countenance of love;
Whose favour, like the clouds of spring, might lower,
And utter now and then an aweful voice,
But had a blessing in its darkest frown,
Threatening at once and nourishing the plant.
We loved, but not enough the gentle hand
That rear'd us. At a thoughtless age allured

But seeming now when all those days are o'er
The sounds of joy, once heard, and heard no more.
Bowles. At Ostend.

[2] In whose look severe,
When angry most he seem'd, and most severe,
What else but favour, grace, and mercy shone?
Par. Lost, x. 1094.

By every gilded folly, we renounced
His sheltering side, and wilfully forewent
That converse which we now in vain regret.
How gladly would the man recall to life
The boy's neglected sire! a mother too,
That softer friend, perhaps more gladly still,
Might he demand them at the gates of death.
Sorrow has since they went subdued and tamed
The playful humour; he could now endure,
(Himself grown sober in the vale of tears,)
And feel a parent's presence no restraint.
But not to understand a treasure's worth[3]
Till time has stolen away the slighted good,
Is cause of half the poverty we feel,
And makes the world the wilderness it is.
The few that pray at all pray oft amiss,
And seeking grace to improve the prize they hold
Would urge a wiser suit, than asking more.
The night was winter in his roughest mood,
The morning sharp and clear. But now at noon
Upon the southern side of the slant hills,
And where the woods fence off the northern blast,
The season smiles, resigning all its rage,
And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue
Without a cloud, and white without a speck
The dazzling splendour of the scene below.
Again the harmony comes o'er the vale,
And through the trees I view the embattled tower

[3] Bestow a tear, nor think thy sorrow lost
Another and another should it cost:
The real worth of virtue ne'er is known
Till vanished from before our eyes and gone.
Vincent Bourne.

Whence all the music. I again perceive
The soothing influence of the wafted strains,
And settle in soft musings as I tread
The walk still verdant under oaks and elms,
Whose outspread branches overarch the glade.
The roof though moveable through all its length
As the wind sways it, has yet well sufficed,
And intercepting in their silent fall
The frequent flakes, has kept a path for me.
No noise is here, or none that hinders thought.
The redbreast warbles still, but is content
With slender notes and more than half suppress'd.
Pleased with his solitude, and flitting light
From spray to spray, where'er he rests he shakes
From many a twig the pendent drops of ice,
That tinkle in the wither'd leaves below.
Stillness accompanied with sounds so soft
Charms more than silence. Meditation here
May think down hours to moments. Here the heart
May give an useful lesson to the head,
And learning wiser grow without his books.
Knowledge and wisdom[4], far from being one,

[4] I do not fancy this relative, mendicant, and precarious understanding; for though we could become learned by other men's reading, I am sure a man can never become wise but by his own wisdom.—*Cotton's Montaigne*, i. 24.

No man is the wiser for his learning, it may administer matter to work in, or objects to work upon; but wit and wisdom are born with man.—*Selden's Table Talk.*

> The curious hand of knowledge doth but pick
> Bare simples. Wisdom pounds them for the sick,
> Knowledge, when Wisdom is too weak to guide her,
> Is like a headstrong horse that throws the rider.
>
> *F. Quarles.*

Have ofttimes no connection. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men,
Wisdom[5] in minds attentive to their own.
Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,
The mere materials with which wisdom builds,
Till smooth'd and squared and fitted to its place,
Does but encumber whom it seems to enrich.
Knowledge is proud that he has learn'd so much;
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.
Books are not seldom talismans and spells
By which the magic art of shrewder wits
Holds an unthinking multitude enthrall'd.
Some to the fascination of a name[6]
Surrender judgement hood-wink'd. Some the style[7]

[5] Of unmade happiness
The rude material,—Wisdom add to this
Wisdom, the sole artificer of bliss.
Young. Satire vi.

But knowledge is a food, and needs no less
Her temperance over appetite, to know
In measure what the mind may well contain;
Oppresses else with surfeit, and soon turns
Wisdom to folly, as nourishment to wind.
Par. Lost, vii. 126.

[6] What woeful stuff this madigral would be
In some starved hackneyed sonneteer or me!
But let a Lord once own the happy lines,
How the wit brightens! how the style refines!
Pope. Essay on Crit. 418.

[7] Others for language all their care express,
And value books, as women men, for dress:
Their praise is still—the style is excellent,
The sense they humbly take upon content. *Ib.* 305.

Her voice is all these tuneful fools admire. *Ib.* 340.

Infatuates, and through labyrinths and wilds
Of error, leads them by a tune entranced.
While sloth seduces more, too weak to bear
The insupportable fatigue of thought,
And swallowing therefore without pause or choice
The total grist unsifted, husks and all.
But trees, and rivulets whose rapid course
Defies the check of winter, haunts of deer,
And sheep-walks populous with bleating lambs,
And lanes in which the primrose ere her time
Peeps through the moss that clothes the hawthorn root,
Deceive no student. Wisdom there, and truth,
Not shy as in the world, and to be won
By slow solicitation, seize at once
The roving thought, and fix it on themselves.
What prodigies can power divine perform
More grand, than it produces year by year,
And all in sight of inattentive man!
Familiar with the effect we slight the cause,
And in the constancy of nature's course,
The regular return of genial months,
And renovation of a faded world,
See nought to wonder at. Should God again,
As once in Gibeon, interrupt the race
Of the undeviating and punctual sun,
How would the world admire! But speaks it less
An agency divine, to make him know
His moment when to sink and when to rise
Age after age, than to arrest his course?
All we behold is miracle, but seen
So duly, all is miracle in vain.
Where now the vital energy that moved,
While summer was, the pure and subtle lymph

Through the imperceptible mæandering veins
Of leaf and flower? It sleeps; and the icy touch
Of unprolific winter has impress'd
A cold stagnation on the intestine tide.
But let the months go round, a few short months,
And all shall be restored[8]. These naked shoots,
Barren as lances, among which the wind
Makes wintry music, sighing as it goes,
Shall put their graceful foliage on again,
And more aspiring and with ampler spread
Shall boast new charms, and more than they have lost.
Then, each in its peculiar honours clad,
Shall publish even to the distant eye
Its family and tribe. Laburnum rich
In streaming gold; syringa ivory pure;
The scented and the scentless rose; this red
And of an humbler growth, the other tall[9],
And throwing up into the darkest gloom
Of neighbouring cypress or more sable yew
Her silver globes, light as the foamy surf
That the wind severs from the broken wave.
The lilac various in array, now white,
Now sanguine, and her beauteous head now set
With purple spikes pyramidal, as if
Studious of ornament, yet unresolved
Which hue she most approved, she chose them all.

[8] Yet bear up awhile
And what your bounded view, which only saw
A little part, deem'd evil is no more:
The storms of wintry time will quickly pass,
And one unbounded Spring encircle all.
Winter.

[9] The guelder-rose.

Copious of flowers the woodbine, pale and wan,
But well compensating their sickly looks
With never-cloying odours, early and late.
Hypericum all bloom, so thick a swarm
Of flowers like flies clothing her slender rods
That scarce a leaf appears. Mezerion too,
Though leafless, well attired, and thick beset
With blushing wreaths investing every spray.
Althæa with the purple eye; the broom,
Yellow and bright as bullion unalloy'd
Her blossoms; and luxuriant above all
The jasmine, throwing wide her elegant sweets,
The deep dark green of whose unvarnish'd leaf
Makes more conspicuous, and illumines more
The bright profusion of her scatter'd stars.
These have been, and these shall be in their day;
And all this uniform uncoloured scene
Shall be dismantled of its fleecy load,
And flush into variety again.
From dearth to plenty, and from death [10] to life,
Is Nature's progress when she lectures man
In heavenly truth; evincing as she makes
The grand transition [11], that there lives and works
A soul in all things, and that soul is God.
The beauties of the wilderness are his,
That make so gay the solitary place
Where no eye sees them. And the fairer forms

[10] The earth, that's nature's mother, is her tomb,
What is her burying place that is her womb.
Romeo.

[11] Builds life on death, on change duration founds.
Pope. 3d Mor. Ess. 167.

That cultivation glories in, are his.
He sets the bright procession on its way,
And marshals all the order of the year.
He marks the bounds which winter may not pass,
And blunts his pointed fury. In its case
Russet and rude, folds up the tender germ
Uninjured, with inimitable art,
And ere one flowery season fades and dies
Designs the blooming wonders of the next.
Some say that in the origin of things,
When all creation started into birth,
The infant elements received a law
From which they swerve not since. That under force
Of that controling ordinance they move,
And need not his immediate hand, who first
Prescribed their course, to regulate it now.
Thus dream they, and contrive to save a God
The encumbrance of his own concerns, and spare
The great Artificer of all that moves
The stress of a continual act, the pain
Of unremitted vigilance and care,
As too laborious and severe a task.
So man the moth, is not afraid it seems
To span Omnipotence, and measure might
That knows no measure, by the scanty rule
And standard of his own, that is to-day,
And is not ere to-morrow's sun go down.
But how should matter occupy a charge
Dull as it is, and satisfy a law
So vast in its demands, unless impell'd
To ceaseless service by a ceaseless force,
And under pressure of some conscious cause?
The Lord of all, himself through all diffused,

Sustains and is the life of all that lives.
Nature is but a name for an effect
Whose cause is God. He feeds the secret fire
By which the mighty process is maintain'd,
Who sleeps not, is not weary; in whose sight
Slow-circling ages are as transient days;
Whose work is without labour, whose designs
No flaw deforms, no difficulty thwarts,
And whose beneficence no charge exhausts.
Him blind antiquity profaned, not served,
With self-taught rites and under various names,
Female and male, Pomona, Pales, Pan,
And Flora and Vertumnus; peopling earth
With tutelary goddesses and gods
That were not, and commending as they would
To each some province, garden, field, or grove.
But all are under One. One spirit—His
Who bore the platted thorns with bleeding brows,
Rules universal nature. Not a flower
But shows some touch in freckle, streak or stain,
Of his unrivall'd pencil. He inspires
Their balmy odours and imparts their hues,
And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes
In grains as countless as the sea-side sands,
The forms with which he sprinkles all the earth.
Happy who walks with him! whom what he finds
Of flavour or of scent in fruit or flower,
Or what he views of beautiful or grand
In Nature, from the broad majestic oak
To the green blade that twinkles in the sun,
Prompts with remembrance of a present God.
His presence who made all so fair, perceived,
Makes all still fairer. As with him no scene

Is dreary, so with him all seasons please [12].
Though winter had been none had man been true,
And earth be punished for its tenant's sake,
Yet not in vengeance; as this smiling sky
So soon succeeding such an angry night,
And these dissolving snows [13], and this clear stream
Recovering fast its liquid music, prove.

Who then that has a mind well strung and tuned
To contemplation, and within his reach
A scene so friendly to his favourite task,
Would waste attention at the chequer'd board [14],
His host of wooden warriors to and fro
Marching and counter-marching, with an eye
As fixt as marble, with a forehead ridged
And furrow'd into storms, and with a hand
Trembling, as if eternity were hung
In balance on his conduct of a pin [15]?
Nor envies he aught more their idle sport
Who pant with application misapplied
To trivial toys, and pushing ivory balls
Across the velvet level, feel a joy

[12] With thee conversing I forget all time,
All seasons and their change all please alike.
Par. Lost, iv. 637.

[13] Dissolving snows in livid torrents lost. *Spring*, 16.

[14] *Turpe est difficiles habere nugas.* Martial.

[15] Or if he [Alexander] played at chess, what string of his soul was not touched by this idle and childish game! I hate and avoid it because it is not play enough; it is too grave and serious a diversion, and I am ashamed to lay out as much thought and study upon that as would serve to much better uses.—*Montaigne, (Cotton's)*, i. 50.

Akin to rapture, when the bauble finds
Its destined goal of difficult access.
Nor deems he wiser him, who gives his noon
To Miss, the Mercer's plague, from shop to shop
Wandering, and littering with unfolded silks
The polished counter, and approving none,
Or promising with smiles to call again.
Nor him, who by his vanity seduced
And soothed into a dream that he discerns
The difference of a Guido from a daub,
Frequents the crowded auction. Station'd there
As duly as the Langford of the show,
With glass at eye, and catalogue in hand,
And tongue accomplished in the fulsome cant
And pedantry that coxcombs learn with ease,
Oft as the price-deciding hammer falls
He notes it in his book, then raps his box,
Swears 'tis a bargain, rails at his hard fate
That he has let it pass,—but never bids.
  Here unmolested, through whatever sign
The sun proceeds, I wander. Neither mist,
Nor freezing sky, nor sultry, checking me,
Nor stranger intermeddling with my joy.
Even in the spring and play-time of the year
That calls the unwonted villager abroad
With all her little ones, a sportive train,
To gather king-cups in the yellow mead,
And prink their hair with daisies, or to pick
A cheap but wholesome sallad from the brook,
These shades are all my own. The timorous hare,
Grown so familiar with her frequent guest,
Scarce shuns me; and the stock-dove unalarm'd

Sits cooing in the pine-tree, nor suspends
His long love-ditty for my near approach.
Drawn from his refuge in some lonely elm
That age or injury has hollow'd deep,
Where on his bed of wool and matted leaves
He has outslept the winter, ventures forth
To frisk a while, and bask in the warm sun,
The squirrel, flippant, pert, and full of play.
He sees me, and at once, swift as a bird,
Ascends the neighbouring beech; there whisks his brush
And perks his ears, and stamps and scolds aloud,
With all the prettiness of feign'd alarm,
And anger insignificantly fierce.

The heart is hard in nature, and unfit
For human fellowship, as being void
Of sympathy, and therefore dead alike
To love and friendship both, that is not pleased
With sight of animals enjoying life,
Nor feels their happiness augment his own.
The bounding fawn that darts across the glade
When none pursues, through mere delight of heart,
And spirits buoyant with excess of glee;
The horse, as wanton and almost as fleet,
That skims the spacious meadow at full speed,
Then stops and snorts, and throwing high his heels
Starts to the voluntary race again;
The very kine that gambol at high noon,
The total herd receiving first from one
That leads the dance, a summons to be gay,
Though wild their strange vagaries, and uncouth
Their efforts, yet resolved with one consent
To give such act and utterance as they may

To ecstasy too big to be suppressed;—
These, and a thousand images of bliss,
With which kind nature graces every scene
Where cruel man defeats not her design,
Impart to the benevolent, who wish
All that are capable of pleasure pleased,
A far superior happiness to theirs,
The comfort of a reasonable joy.
Man scarce had risen, obedient to His call
Who form'd him, from the dust his future grave,
When he was crown'd as never king was since.
God set the diadem upon his head,
And angel choirs attended. Wondering stood
The new-made monarch, while before him pass'd,
All happy and all perfect in their kind,
The creatures, summon'd from their various haunts
To see their sovereign, and confess his sway.
Vast was his empire, absolute his power,
Or bounded only by a law whose force
'Twas his sublimest privilege to feel
And own, the law of universal love.
He ruled with meekness, they obeyed with joy.
No cruel purpose lurk'd within his heart,
And no distrust of his intent in theirs.
So Eden was a scene of harmless sport,
Where kindness on his part who ruled the whole
Begat a tranquil confidence in all,
And fear as yet was not, nor cause for fear.
But sin marr'd all; and the revolt of man,
That source of evils not exhausted yet,
Was punish'd with revolt of his from him.
Garden of God, how terrible the change

Thy groves and lawns then witness'd! every heart,
Each animal of every name, conceived
A jealousy and an instinctive fear,
And conscious of some danger, either fled
Precipitate the loathed abode of man,
Or growl'd defiance in such angry sort,
As taught him too to tremble in his turn.
Thus harmony and family accord
Were driven from Paradise; and in that hour
The seeds of cruelty that since have swell'd
To such gigantic and enormous growth,
Were sown in human nature's fruitful soil.
Hence date the persecution and the pain
That man inflicts on all inferior kinds,
Regardless of their plaints. To make him sport,
To gratify the frenzy of his wrath,
Or his base gluttony, are causes good
And just in his account, why bird and beast
Should suffer torture, and the streams be dyed
With blood of their inhabitants impaled.
Earth groans beneath the burthen of a war
Waged with defenceless innocence, while he,
Not satisfied to prey on all around,
Adds tenfold bitterness to death, by pangs
Needless, and first torments ere he devours.
Now happiest they that occupy the scenes
The most remote from his abhorr'd resort,
Whom once as delegate of God on earth
They fear'd, and as his perfect image loved.
The wilderness is theirs with all its caves,
Its hollow glens, its thickets, and its plains
Unvisited by man. There they are free,

And howl and roar as likes them, uncontrol'd,
Nor ask his leave to slumber or to play.
Woe to the tyrant if he dare intrude
Within the confines of their wild domain;
The Lion tells him—I am monarch here,—
And if he spares him, spares him on the terms
Of royal mercy, and through generous scorn
To rend a victim trembling at his foot.
In measure as by force of instinct drawn,
Or by necessity constrain'd, they live
Dependent upon man, those in his fields,
These at his crib, and some beneath his roof;
They prove too often at how dear a rate
He sells protection. Witness, at his foot
The spaniel dying for some venial fault,
Under dissection of the knotted scourge.
Witness the patient ox, with stripes and yells
Driven to the slaughter, goaded as he runs
To madness, while the savage at his heels
Laughs at the frantic sufferer's fury spent
Upon the guiltless passenger o'erthrown.
He too is witness, noblest of the train
That wait on man, the flight-performing horse:
With unsuspecting readiness he takes
His murtherer on his back, and push'd all day
With bleeding sides and flanks that heave for life
To the far-distant goal, arrives and dies.
So little mercy shows who needs so much!
Does law, so jealous in the cause of man,
Denounce no doom on the delinquent? None.
He lives, and o'er his brimming beaker boasts
(As if barbarity were high desert,)

The inglorious feat, and clamorous in praise
Of the poor brute, seems wisely to suppose
The honours of his matchless horse his own.
But many a crime deem'd innocent on earth
Is register'd in heaven, and these, no doubt,
Have each their record, with a curse annex'd.
Man may dismiss compassion from his heart,
But God will never. When he charged the Jew
To assist his foe's down-fallen beast to rise,
And when the bush-exploring boy that seized
The young, to let the parent bird go free,
Proved he not plainly that his meaner works
Are yet his care, and have an interest all,
All, in the universal Father's love?
On Noah, and in him on all mankind
The charter was conferr'd by which we hold
The flesh of animals in fee, and claim
O'er all we feed on, power of life and death.
But read the instrument, and mark it well.
The oppression of a tyrannous controul
Can find no warrant there. Feed then, and yield
Thanks for thy food. Carnivorous through sin
Feed on the slain, but spare the living brute.
The Governor of all, himself to all
So bountiful, in whose attentive ear
The unfledged raven and the lion's whelp
Plead not in vain for pity on the pangs
Of hunger unassuaged, has interposed,
Not seldom, his avenging arm, to smite
The injurious trampler upon nature's law
That claims forbearance even for a brute.
He hates the hardness of a Balaam's heart;
And prophet as he was, he might not strike

The blameless animal, without rebuke,
On which he rode: her opportune offence
Saved him, or the unrelenting seer had died.
He sees that human equity is slack
To interfere, though in so just a cause
And makes the task his own; inspiring dumb
And helpless victims with a sense so keen
Of injury, with such knowledge of their strength,
And such sagacity to take revenge,
That oft the beast has seem'd to judge the man.
An ancient, not a legendary tale,
By one of sound intelligence rehearsed,
(If such, who plead for Providence, may seem
In modern eyes,) shall make the doctrine clear.
  Where England stretch'd towards the setting sun
Narrow and long, o'erlooks the western wave,
Dwelt young Misagathus; a scorner he
Of God and goodness, atheist in ostent,
Vicious in act, in temper savage-fierce.
He journey'd, and his chance was as he went,
To join a traveller of far different note,
Evander, famed for piety, for years
Deserving honour, but for wisdom more.
Fame had not left the venerable man
A stranger to the manners of the youth,
Whose face too was familiar to his view.
Their way was on the margin of the land,
O'er the green summit of the rocks whose base
Beats back the roaring surge [16], scarce heard so high.
The charity that warm'd his heart was moved

[16] The murmuring surge,
That on the unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes,
Cannot be heard so high. *King Lear*, iv. 6.

At sight of the man-monster. With a smile
Gentle, and affable, and full of grace,
As fearful of offending whom he wish'd
Much to persuade, he plied his ear with truths
Not harshly thunder'd forth or rudely press'd,
But like his purpose, gracious, kind, and sweet.
And dost thou dream, the impenetrable man
Exclaim'd, that me, the lullabies of age
And fantasies of dotards such as thou
Can cheat, or move a moment's fear in me?
Mark now the proof I give thee, that the brave
Need no such aids as superstition lends
To steel their hearts against the dread of death!
He spoke, and to the precipice at hand
Push'd with a madman's fury. Fancy shrinks
And the blood thrills and curdles at the thought
Of such a gulf as he design'd his grave.
But though the felon on his back could dare
The dreadful leap, more rational his steed
Declined the death, and wheeling swiftly round
Or ere his hoof had press'd the crumbling verge,
Baffled his rider, saved against his will.
The frenzy of the brain may be redress'd
By medicine well applied, but without grace
The heart's insanity admits no cure.
Enraged the more by what might have reform'd
His horrible intent, again he sought
Destruction with a zeal to be destroyed,
With sounding whip and rowels dyed in blood.
But still in vain. The providence that meant
A longer date to the far nobler beast,
Spared yet again the ignobler for his sake.

And now, his prowess proved, and his sincere
Incurable obduracy evinced,
His rage grew cool; and pleased perhaps to have earn'd
So cheaply the renown of that attempt,
With looks of some complacence he resumed
His road, deriding much the blank amaze
Of good Evander, still where he was left
Fixt motionless, and petrified with dread.
So on they fared; discourse on other themes
Ensuing, seem'd to obliterate the past,
And tamer far for so much fury shown,
(As is the course of rash and fiery men,)
The rude companion smiled as if transform'd.
But 'twas a transient calm. A storm was near,
An unsuspected storm. His hour was come.
The impious challenger of power divine
Was now to learn, that Heaven though slow to wrath,
Is never with impunity defied.
His horse, as he had caught his master's mood,
Snorting, and starting into sudden rage,
Unbidden, and not now to be controul'd,
Rush'd to the cliff, and having reach'd it, stood.
At once the shock unseated him. He flew
Sheer o'er the craggy barrier, and immersed
Deep in the flood, found, when he sought it not,
The death he had deserved, and died alone.
So God wrought double justice; made the fool
The victim of his own tremendous choice,
And taught a brute the way to safe revenge.
I would not enter on my list of friends
(Though graced with polish'd manners and fine sense
Yet wanting sensibility,) the man

Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.
An inadvertent step may crush the snail
That crawls at evening in the public path,
But he that has humanity, forewarned,
Will tread aside, and let the reptile live.
The creeping vermin, loathsome to the sight,
And charged perhaps with venom, that intrudes
A visitor unwelcome into scenes
Sacred to neatness and repose, the alcove,
The chamber, or refectory, may die[17].
A necessary act incurs no blame.
Not so when held within their proper bounds
And guiltless of offence, they range the air,
Or take their pastime in the spacious field.
There they are privileged; and he that hunts
Or harms them there, is guilty of a wrong,
Disturbs the economy of nature's realm,
Who when she form'd, design'd them an abode.
The sum is this: if man's convenience, health,
Or safety interfere, his rights and claims
Are paramount, and must extinguish theirs.
Else they are all—the meanest things that are,
As free to live and to enjoy that life,
As God was free to form them at the first,

[17] Other creature here
Beast, bird, insect, or worm, durst enter none.
Par. Lost, iv. 703.

Chase from all my bounds
Each thing impure or noxious. Enter in,
O stranger, undismay'd. Nor bat, nor toad
Here lurks. *Akenside. Inscrip. for a Grotto.*

Who in his sovereign wisdom made them all.
Ye therefore who love mercy, teach your sons
To love it too. The spring-time of our years
Is soon dishonour'd and defiled in most
By budding ills, that ask a prudent hand
To check them. But alas! none sooner shoots,
If unrestrain'd, into luxuriant growth,
Than cruelty, most devilish of them all.
Mercy to him that shows it, is the rule
And righteous limitation of its act
By which Heaven moves in pardoning guilty man;
And he that shows none, being ripe in years,
And conscious of the outrage he commits,
Shall seek it, and not find it in his turn.
  Distinguish'd much by reason, and still more
By our capacity of grace divine,
From creatures that exist but for our sake,
Which having served us, perish, we are held
Accountable, and God, some future day,
Will reckon with us roundly for the abuse
Of what he deems no mean or trivial trust.
Superior as we are, they yet depend
Not more on human help, than we on theirs.
Their strength, or speed, or vigilance, were given
In aid of our defects. In some are found
Such teachable and apprehensive parts,
That man's attainments in his own concerns,
Match'd with the expertness of the brutes in theirs,
Are oft-times vanquish'd and thrown far behind.
Some show that nice sagacity of smell,
And read with such discernment in the port

And figure of the man, his secret aim,
That oft we owe our safety to a skill
We could not teach, and must despair to learn[18].
But learn we might, if not too proud to stoop
To quadrupede instructors, many a good
And useful quality, and virtue too,
Rarely exemplified among ourselves;
Attachment never to be wean'd, or changed
By any change of fortune, proof alike
Against unkindness, absence, and neglect;
Fidelity, that neither bribe nor threat
Can move or warp, and gratitude for small
And trivial favours, lasting as the life,
And glistening even in the dying eye.
Man praises man. Desert in arts or arms
Wins public honour; and ten thousand sit
Patiently present at a sacred song,
Commemoration-mad; content to hear
(Oh wonderful effect of music's power!)
Messiah's eulogy, for Handel's sake.
But less, methinks, than sacrilege might serve—
(For was it less? What heathen would have dared
To strip Jove's statue of his oaken wreath
And hang it up in honour of a man?)
Much less might serve, when all that we design
Is but to gratify an itching ear,

[18] In their looks
Much reason, and in their actions, oft appears.
Par. Lost, ix. 558.

On sculls that cannot teach and will not learn.
Book ii. 394.

And give the day to a musician's praise.
Remember Handel? who that was not born
Deaf as the dead to harmony, forgets,
Or can, the more than Homer of his age?
Yes—we remember him. And while we praise
A talent so divine, remember too
That His most holy book from whom it came
Was never meant, was never used before
To buckram out the memory of a man.
But hush!—the muse perhaps is too severe,
And with a gravity beyond the size
And measure of the offence, rebukes a deed
Less impious than absurd, and owing more
To want of judgement than to wrong design.
So in the chapel of old Ely House,
When wandering Charles, who meant to be the third,
Had fled from William, and the news was fresh,
The simple clerk but loyal, did announce,
And eke did rear right merrily, two staves,
Sung to the praise and glory of King George.
—Man praises man, and Garrick's memory next,
When time hath somewhat mellow'd it, and made
The idol of our worship while he lived,
The God of our idolatry once more,
Shall have its altar; and the world shall go
In pilgrimage to bow before his shrine.
The theatre too small, shall suffocate
Its squeezed contents, and more than it admits
Shall sigh at their exclusion, and return
Ungratified. For there some noble lord
Shall stuff his shoulders with King Richard's bunch,

Or wrap himself in Hamlet's inky cloak,
And strut and storm and straddle, stamp and stare,
To show the world how Garrick did not act[19].
For Garrick was a worshipper himself;
He drew the Liturgy, and framed the rites
And solemn ceremonial of the day,
And call'd the world to worship on the banks
Of Avon famed in song. Ah! pleasant proof
That piety has still in human hearts
Some place, a spark or two not yet extinct.
The mulberry tree was hung with blooming wreaths,
The mulberry tree stood centre of the dance,
The mulberry tree was hymn'd with dulcet airs,
And from his touchwood trunk the mulberry tree
Supplied such relics as devotion holds
Still sacred, and preserves with pious care.
So 'twas an hallow'd time. Decorum reign'd,
And mirth without offence. No few return'd
Doubtless much edified, and all refreshed.
—Man praises man. The rabble all alive,
From tippling-benches, cellars, stalls, and styes,
Swarm in the streets. The statesman of the day,
A pompous and slow-moving pageant comes.
Some shout him, and some hang upon his car
To gaze in his eyes and bless him. Maidens wave
Their 'kerchiefs, and old women weep for joy;

[19] How his eyes languish! how his thoughts adore
That painted coat which Joseph never wore.
Young. Satire iv.

That the world may know
How far he went for what was nothing worth.
Book vi. 238.

While others not so satisfied unhorse
The gilded equipage, and turning loose
His steeds, usurp a place they well deserve.
Why? what has charm'd them? Hath he saved the state?
No. Doth he purpose its salvation? No.
Enchanting novelty, that moon at full,
That finds out every crevice of the head
That is not sound and perfect, hath in theirs
Wrought this disturbance. But the wane is near,
And his own cattle must suffice him soon.
Thus idly do we waste the breath of praise,
And dedicate a tribute, in its use
And just direction sacred, to a thing
Doom'd to the dust, or lodged already there.
Encomium in old time was poets' work;
But poets having lavishly long since
Exhausted all materials of the art,
The task now falls into the public hand.
And I, contented with an humble theme,
Have poured my stream of panegyric down
The vale of nature, where it creeps and winds
Among her lovely works, with a secure
And unambitious course, reflecting clear
If not the virtues yet the worth of brutes.
And I am recompensed, and deem the toils
Of poetry not lost, if verse of mine
May stand between an animal and woe,
And teach one tyrant pity for his drudge.
  The groans of nature in this nether world,
Which Heaven has heard for ages, have an end.
Foretold by prophets, and by poets sung
Whose fire was kindled at the prophets' lamp,

The time of rest, the promised sabbath comes.
Six thousand years of sorrow have well nigh
Fulfill'd their tardy and disastrous course
Over a sinful world. And what remains
Of this tempestuous state of human things,
Is merely as the working of a sea
Before a calm, that rocks itself to rest.
For He whose car the winds are, and the clouds
The dust that waits upon his sultry march
When sin hath moved him and his wrath is hot,
Shall visit earth in mercy; shall descend
Propitious, in his chariot paved with love,
And what his storms have blasted and defaced
For man's revolt, shall with a smile repair.
Sweet is the harp of prophecy: too sweet
Not to be wrong'd by a mere mortal touch;
Nor can the wonders it records be sung
To meaner music, and not suffer loss.
But when a poet, or when one like me,
Happy to rove among poetic flowers,
Though poor in skill to rear them, lights at last
On some fair theme, some theme divinely fair[20],
Such is the impulse and the spur he feels
To give it praise proportioned to its worth,
That not to attempt it, arduous as he deems
The labour, were a task more arduous still.
Oh scenes surpassing fable, and yet true,
Scenes of accomplish'd bliss! which who can see
Though but in distant prospect, and not feel

[20] True she is fair, oh how divinely fair!
Addison. Cato.

His soul refresh'd with foretaste of the joy?
Rivers of gladness water all the earth,
And clothe all climes with beauty; the reproach
Of barrenness is past. The fruitful field[21]
Laughs with abundance; and the land once lean,
Or fertile only in its own disgrace,
Exults to see its thistly curse repealed.
The various seasons woven into one,
And that one season an eternal spring,
The garden fears no blight, and needs no fence,
For there is none to covet, all are full.
The lion and the libbard and the bear
Graze with the fearless flocks. All bask at noon
Together, or all gambol in the shade
Of the same grove, and drink one common stream.
Antipathies are none. No foe to man
Lurks in the serpent now; the mother sees
And smiles to see her infant's playful hand
Stretch'd forth to dally with the crested worm,
To stroke his azure neck, or to receive
The lambent homage of his arrowy tongue.
All creatures worship man, and all mankind
One Lord, one Father. Error has no place;
That creeping pestilence is driven away,
The breath of heaven has chased it. In the heart
No passion touches a discordant string,
But all is harmony and love. Disease
Is not. The pure and uncontaminate blood
Holds its due course, nor fears the frost of age.

[21] The folds shall be full of sheep: the valleys also shall stand so thick with corn that they shall laugh and sing.
Psalm lxv.

One song employs all nations, and all cry
" Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us!"
The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
Shout to each other; and the mountain tops
From distant mountains catch the flying joy,
Till nation after nation taught the strain,
Each rolls the rapturous Hosanna round.
Behold the measure of the promise fill'd,
See Salem built, the labour of a God!
Bright as a sun the sacred city shines;
All kingdoms and all princes of the earth
Flock to that light; the glory of all lands
Flows into her, unbounded is her joy,
And endless her increase. Thy rams are there
Nebaioth, and the flocks of Kedar[22] there;
The looms of Ormus, and the mines of Ind[23],
And Saba's spicy groves pay tribute there.
Praise is in all her gates. Upon her walls,
And in her streets, and in her spacious courts
Is heard salvation. Eastern Java there
Kneels with the native of the farthest West,
And Æthiopia spreads abroad the hand
And worships. Her report has travell'd forth
Into all lands. From every clime they come
To see thy beauty, and to share thy joy

[22] Nebaioth and Kedar, the sons of Ishmael and progenitors of the Arabs, in the prophetic scripture here alluded to, may be reasonably considered as representatives of the Gentiles at large. C.

[23] High on a throne of royal state which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind.
Par. Lost, ii. 2.

O Sion! an assembly such as earth
Saw never, such as heaven stoops down to see.
Thus heavenward all things tend. For all were once
Perfect, and all must be at length restored.
So God has greatly purposed; who would else
In his dishonoured works himself endure
Dishonour, and be wrong'd without redress.
Haste then, and wheel away a shatter'd world,
Ye slow-revolving seasons! We would see
(A sight to which our eyes are strangers yet,)
A world that does not dread and hate his laws,
And suffer for its crime: would learn how fair
The creature is that God pronounces good,
How pleasant in itself what pleases him.
Here every drop of honey hides a sting;
Worms wind themselves into our sweetest flowers,
And even the joy that haply some poor heart
Derives from heaven, pure as the fountain is,
Is sullied in the stream; taking a taint
From touch of human lips, at best impure.
Oh for a world in principle as chaste
As this is gross and selfish! over which
Custom and prejudice shall bear no sway
That govern all things here, shouldering aside
The meek and modest truth, and forcing her
To seek a refuge from the tongue of strife
In nooks obscure, far from the ways of men[24].
Where violence shall never lift the sword,
Nor cunning justify the proud man's wrong,

[24] From the cheerful ways of men
Cut off. *Par. Lost*, iii. 46.

Leaving the poor no remedy but tears.
Where he that fills an office, shall esteem
The occasion it presents of doing good
More than the perquisite: where law shall speak
Seldom, and never but as wisdom prompts
And equity; not jealous more to guard
A worthless form, than to decide aright:
Where fashion shall not sanctify abuse,
Nor smooth good-breeding (supplemental grace,)
With lean performance ape the work of love.
Come then, and added to thy many crowns
Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth,
Thou who alone art worthy! it was thine
By ancient covenant ere nature's birth,
And thou hast made it thine by purchase since,
And overpaid its value with thy blood.
Thy saints proclaim thee King; and in their hearts
Thy title is engraven with a pen
Dipt in the fountain of eternal love.
Thy saints proclaim thee King; and thy delay
Gives courage to their foes, who, could they see
The dawn of thy last advent long-desired,
Would creep into the bowels of the hills,
And flee for safety to the falling rocks.
The very spirit of the world is tired
Of its own taunting question ask'd so long,
"Where is the promise of your Lord's approach?"
The infidel has shot his bolts away,
Till his exhausted quiver yielding none,
He gleans the blunted shafts that have recoiled,
And aims them at the shield of truth again.
The veil is rent, rent too by priestly hands,

That hides divinity from mortal eyes,
And all the mysteries to faith proposed
Insulted and traduced, are cast aside
As useless, to the moles and to the bats.
They now are deem'd the faithful, and are praised,
Who constant only in rejecting thee,
Deny thy Godhead with a martyr's zeal,
And quit their office for their error's sake.
Blind and in love with darkness! yet even these
Worthy, compared with sycophants, who knee
Thy name, adoring, and then preach thee man.
So fares thy church. But how thy church may fare
The world takes little thought; who will may preach,
And what they will. All pastors are alike
To wandering sheep, resolved to follow none.
Two gods divide them all, Pleasure and Gain.
For these they live, they sacrifice to these,
And in their service wage perpetual war
With conscience and with thee. Lust in their hearts,
And mischief in their hands, they roam the earth
To prey upon each other; stubborn, fierce,
High-minded, foaming out their own disgrace.
Thy prophets speak of such; and noting down
The features of the last degenerate times,
Exhibit every lineament of these.
Come then, and added to thy many crowns
Receive yet one, as radiant as the rest,
Due to thy last and most effectual work,
Thy word fulfilled, the conquest of a world!

He is the happy man, whose life even now
Shows somewhat of that happier life to come;
Who doomed to an obscure but tranquil state

Is pleased with it, and were he free to choose[25],
Would make his fate his choice; whom peace, the fruit
Of virtue, and whom virtue, fruit of faith,
Prepare for happiness; bespeak him one
Content indeed to sojourn while he must
Below the skies, but having there his home.
The world o'erlooks him in her busy search
Of objects more illustrious in her view;
And occupied as earnestly as she,
Though more sublimely, he o'erlooks the world.
She scorns his pleasures, for she knows them not;
He seeks not hers, for he has proved them vain.
He cannot skim the ground like summer birds
Pursuing gilded flies, and such he deems
Her honours, her emoluments, her joys.
Therefore in contemplation is his bliss,
Whose power is such, that whom she lifts from earth
She makes familiar with a heaven unseen,
And shows him glories yet to be reveal'd.
Not slothful he, though seeming unemployed,
And censured oft as useless. Stillest[26] streams
Oft water fairest meadows, and the bird

[25] He has a heart, as Marvel expresses it, to make his destiny his choice. *Elia*, vol. ii. p. 206.

[26] How seldom do we look through the form and circumstances of affairs into their real importance; and how much are we led to rate them by the stir and noise with which they are attended! .... But we might reflect that the most perfect and beneficial agency is exerted without precipitation or tumult; that all the planetary revolutions are performed in majestic order and silence, and with less impression upon the senses than the motions of a water mill.

Rural Philosophy, by Ely Bates.

That flutters least is longest on the wing[27].
Ask him indeed what trophies he has raised,
Or what achievements of immortal fame
He purposes, and he shall answer—none.
His warfare is within. There unfatigued
His fervent spirit labours. There he fights,
And there obtains fresh triumphs o'er himself,
And never-withering wreaths, compared with which
The laurels that a Cæsar reaps are weeds[28].
Perhaps the self-approving haughty world,
(That as she sweeps him with her whistling silks
Scarce deigns to notice him, or if she see
Deems him a cipher in the works of God,)
Receives advantage from his noiseless hours
Of which she little dreams. Perhaps she owes
Her sunshine and her rain, her blooming spring
And plenteous harvest, to the prayer he makes,
When Isaac like, the solitary saint
Walks forth to meditate at eventide,

[27] Like virtue, thriving most where little seen.
Book iii. 664.

Strongest minds
Are often those of whom the noisy world
Hears least. *Excursion*, p. 7.

[28] He deserves the name of a great and good man, who serves God, and is a friend to mankind, and receives the most ungrateful returns from the world, and endures them with a calm and composed mind; who dares look scorn and death and infamy in the face, who can stand forth unmoved and patiently bear to be derided as a fool and an idiot, to be pointed out as a madman and an enthusiast, to be reviled, &c. He who can pass through these trials is a conqueror indeed, and what the world calls courage scarcely deserves that name when compared to this behaviour. *Jortin's Discourses*, ii. p. 125.

And think on her, who thinks not for herself.
Forgive him then, thou bustler in concerns
Of little worth, and idler in the best,
If author of no mischief and some good,
He seek his proper happiness by means
That may advance, but cannot hinder thine.
Nor though he tread the secret path of life,
Engage no notice, and enjoy much ease,
Account him an incumbrance on the state,
Receiving benefits, and rendering none.
His sphere though humble, if that humble sphere
Shine with his fair example, and though small
His influence, if that influence all be spent
In soothing sorrow and in quenching strife,
In aiding helpless indigence, in works
From which at least a grateful few derive
Some taste of comfort in a world of woe,
Then let the supercilious great confess
He serves his country; recompenses well
The state beneath the shadow of whose vine
He sits secure, and in the scale of life
Holds no ignoble, though a slighted place.
The man whose virtues are more felt than seen,
Must drop indeed the hope of public praise;
But he may boast what few that win it can,
That if his country stand not by his skill,
At least his follies have not wrought her fall.
Polite refinement offers him in vain
Her golden tube, through which a sensual world
Draws gross impurity, and likes it well,
The neat conveyance hiding all the offence.
Not that he peevishly rejects a mode

Because that world adopts it[29]: if it bear
The stamp and clear impression of good sense,
And be not costly more than of true worth,
He puts it on, and for decorum sake
Can wear it even as gracefully as she[30].
She judges of refinement by the eye,
He by the test of conscience, and a heart
Not soon deceived; aware that what is base
No polish can make sterling, and that vice
Though well perfumed and elegantly dress'd,
Like an unburied carcase trick'd with flowers,
Is but a garnish'd nuisance, fitter far
For cleanly riddance than for fair attire.
So life glides smoothly and by stealth away,
More golden than that age of fabled gold
Renown'd in ancient song; not vex'd with care
Or stained with guilt, beneficent, approved
Of God and man, and peaceful in its end.
So glide my life away[31]! and so at last

[29] Though wrong the mode, comply; more sense is shown
In wearing others' follies than your own.
Young. Satire iv.

[30] Be not the first by whom the new are tried,
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.
Pope. Essay on Crit. ii. 338.

[31] And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage. *Penseroso.*

Thus sheltered, free from care and strife
May I enjoy a calm through life,
Unhurt by sickness blasting rage,
And slowy mellowing in age
When fate extends its gathering gripe.

My share of duties decently fulfilled,
May some disease, not tardy to perform
Its destined office, yet with gentle stroke,
Dismiss me weary to a safe retreat
Beneath the turf that I have often trod.
It shall not grieve me, then, that once when called
To dress a Sofa with the flowers of verse,
I play'd awhile, obedient to the fair,
With that light task; but soon to please her more
Whom flowers alone I knew would little please,
Let fall the unfinish'd wreath, and roved for fruit.
Roved far and gather'd much. Some harsh, 'tis true,
Pick'd from the thorns and briers of reproof,
But wholesome, well-digested. Grateful some
To palates that can taste immortal truth,
Insipid else, and sure to be despised.
But all is in His hand whose praise I seek.
In vain the poet sings, and the world hears,
If he regard not, though divine the theme.
'Tis not in artful measures, in the chime
And idle tinkling of a minstrel's lyre
To charm His ear, whose eye is on the heart,
Whose frown can disappoint the proudest strain,
Whose approbation—prosper even mine.

Quit a worn being without pain,
Perhaps to blossom soon again. *Spleen.*

Beg to lay it down
Glad to be so dismissed in peace. *Par. Lost*, ii. 506.

AN EPISTLE TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR Joseph,—five and twenty years ago—
Alas! how time escapes—'tis even so!—
With frequent intercourse and always sweet
And always friendly we were wont to cheat
A tedious hour,—and now we never meet.
As some grave gentleman in Terence says,
('Twas therefore much the same in ancient days,)
Good lack, we know not what to-morrow brings,—
Strange fluctuation of all human things!
True. Changes will befall, and friends may part,
But distance only cannot change the heart:
And were I call'd to prove the assertion true,
One proof should serve, a reference to you.
Whence comes it then, that in the wane of life,
Though nothing have occurr'd to kindle strife,
We find the friends we fancied we had won,
Though numerous once, reduced to few or none?
Can gold grow worthless that has stood the touch?
No. Gold they seemed, but they were never such.
Horatio's servant once, with bow and cringe
Swinging the parlour door upon its hinge,
Dreading a negative, and overawed
Lest he should trespass, begg'd to go abroad.
Go, fellow!—whither?—turning short about—
Nay. Stay at home;—you're always going out.
'Tis but a step, sir, just at the street's end.—
For what?—An please you, sir, to see a friend.
A friend? Horatio cried, and seem'd to start,—
Yea marry shalt thou, and with all my heart—

And fetch my cloak, for though the night be raw
I'll see him too—the first I ever saw.
I knew the man, and knew his nature mild,
And was his plaything often when a child;
But somewhat at that moment pinch'd him close,
Else he was seldom bitter or morose:
Perhaps his confidence just then betray'd,
His grief might prompt him with the speech he made;
Perhaps 'twas mere good humour gave it birth,
The harmless play of pleasantry and mirth.
Howe'er it was, his language in my mind
Bespoke at least a man that knew mankind.
But not to moralize too much, and strain
To prove an evil of which all complain,
(I hate long arguments, verbosely spun,)
One story more, dear Hill, and I have done.
Once on a time, an Emperor, a wise man,
No matter where, in China or Japan,
Decreed that whosoever should offend
Against the well-known duties of a friend,
Convicted once, should ever after wear
But half a coat, and show his bosom bare;
The punishment importing this, no doubt,
That all was naught within, and all found out.
Oh happy Britain! we have not to fear
Such hard and arbitrary measure here;
Else could a law like that which I relate,
Once have the sanction of our triple state,
Some few[1] that I have known in days of old
Would run most dreadful risk of catching cold.

[1] In a letter to Mr. Newton, (July 9, 1785,) Cowper tells him that Thurlow and Colman are the former friends to whom

While you, my friend, whatever wind should blow,
Might traverse England safely to and fro,
An honest man, close-button'd to the chin,
Broad-cloth without, and a warm heart within.

he particularly alludes in these lines, " and it is possible," he adds, " that they may take to themselves a censure that they so well deserve. If not, it matters not; for I shall never have any communication with them hereafter." After the success of his second volume, however, their acquaintance was renewed, and Cowper forgave the unkindness of their neglect.

TIROCINIUM:

OR,

A REVIEW OF SCHOOLS.

Κεφαλαιον δη παιδειας ορθη τροφη.
PLATO.

Αρχη πολιτειας απασης, νεων τροφα.
DIOG. LAERT.

TO THE

REV. WILLIAM CAWTHORNE UNWIN,

RECTOR OF STOCK IN ESSEX,

THE TUTOR OF HIS TWO SONS,

THE FOLLOWING

Poem,

RECOMMENDING PRIVATE TUITION

IN PREFERENCE TO

AN EDUCATION AT SCHOOL,

IS INSCRIBED,

BY HIS AFFECTIONATE FRIEND,

WILLIAM COWPER.

Olney, Nov. 6, 1784.

TIROCINIUM.

It is not from his form in which we trace
Strength joined with beauty, dignity with grace,
That man, the master of this globe, derives
His right of empire over all that lives.
That form indeed, the associate of a mind
Vast in its powers, ethereal in its kind,
That form, the labour of Almighty skill,
Framed for the service of a free-born will,
Asserts precedence, and bespeaks controul,
But borrows all its grandeur from the soul.
Hers is the state, the splendour and the throne,
An intellectual kingdom, all her own.
For her, the memory fills her ample page
With truths pour'd down from every distant age,
For her amasses an unbounded store,
The wisdom of great nations, now no more,
Though laden, not encumber'd with her spoil,
Laborious, yet unconscious of her toil,
When copiously supplied then most enlarged,
Still to be fed, and not to be surcharged.
For her, the fancy roving unconfined,
The present Muse of every pensive mind,
Works magic wonders, adds a brighter hue
To nature's scenes, than nature ever knew;
At her command, winds rise and waters roar,
Again she lays them slumbering on the shore;

With flower and fruit the wilderness supplies,
Or bids the rocks in ruder pomp arise.
For her, the judgement, umpire in the strife,
That grace and nature have to wage through life,
Quick-sighted arbiter of good and ill,
Appointed sage preceptor to the will,
Condemns, approves, and with a faithful voice
Guides the decision of a doubtful choice.
Why did the fiat of a God give birth
To yon fair sun and his attendant earth,
And when descending he resigns the skies,
Why takes the gentler moon her turn to rise,
Whom ocean feels through all his countless waves,
And owns her power on every shore he laves?
Why do the seasons still enrich the year,
Fruitful and young as in their first career?
Spring hangs her infant blossoms on the trees,
Rock'd in the cradle of the western breeze;
Summer in haste the thriving charge receives
Beneath the shade of her expanded leaves,
Till autumn's fiercer heats and plenteous dews
Dye them at last in all their glowing hues;—
'Twere wild profusion all, and bootless waste,
Power misemployed, munificence misplaced,
Had not its Author dignified the plan,
And crowned it with the majesty of man.
Thus form'd, thus placed, intelligent, and taught,
Look where he will, the wonders God has wrought,
The wildest scorner of his Maker's laws
Finds in a sober moment time to pause,
To press the important question on his heart,
"Why form'd at all, and wherefore as thou art?"

If man be what he seems, this hour a slave,
The next mere dust and ashes in the grave,
Endued with reason only to descry
His crimes and follies with an aching eye,
With passions, just that he may prove with pain
The force he spends against their fury, vain;
And if soon after having burnt by turns
With every lust with which frail nature burns,
His being end where death dissolves the bond,
The tomb take all, and all be blank beyond,
Then he, of all that nature has brought forth,
Stands self-impeach'd the creature of least worth,
And useless while he lives, and when he dies,
Brings into doubt the wisdom of the skies.
Truths that the learn'd pursue with eager thought,
Are not important always as dear-bought,
Proving at last, though told in pompous strains,
A childish waste of philosophic pains;
But truths on which depends our main concern,
That 'tis our shame and misery not to learn,
Shine by the side of every path we tread
With such a lustre, he that runs may read.
'Tis true, that if to trifle life away
Down to the sunset of their latest day,
Then perish on futurity's wide shore
Like fleeting exhalations, found no more,
Were all that Heaven required of human kind,
And all the plan their destiny designed,
What none could reverence all might justly blame,
And man would breathe but for his Maker's shame.
But reason heard, and nature well perused,
At once the dreaming mind is disabused,

If all we find possessing earth, sea, air,
Reflect his attributes who placed them there,
Fulfil the purpose, and appear design'd
Proofs of the wisdom of the all-seeing Mind,
'Tis plain, the creature whom he chose to invest
With kingship and dominion o'er the rest,
Received his nobler nature, and was made
Fit for the power in which he stands array'd,
That first or last, hereafter if not here,
He too might make his Author's wisdom clear,
Praise him on earth, or obstinately dumb
Suffer his justice in a world to come.
This once believed, 'twere logic misapplied
To prove a consequence by none denied,
That we are bound to cast the minds of youth
Betimes into the mould of heavenly truth,
That taught of God they may indeed be wise,
Nor ignorantly wandering miss the skies.

In early days the conscience has in most
A quickness, which in later life is lost,
Preserved from guilt by salutary fears,
Or, guilty, soon relenting into tears.
Too careless often as our years proceed,
What friends we sort with, or what books we read,
Our parents yet exert a prudent care
To feed our infant minds with proper fare,
And wisely store the nursery by degrees
With wholesome learning, yet acquired with ease.
Neatly secured from being soiled or torn
Beneath a pane of thin translucent horn,
A book (to please us at a tender age
'Tis call'd a book, though but a single page,)

Presents the prayer the Saviour deign'd to teach,
Which children use, and parsons—when they preach.
Lisping our syllables, we scramble next,
Through moral narrative, or sacred text,
And learn with wonder how this world began,
Who made, who marr'd, and who has ransom'd man:
Points, which unless the Scripture made them plain,
The wisest heads might agitate in vain.
Oh thou, whom borne on fancy's eager wing
Back to the season of life's happy spring,
I pleased remember, and while memory yet
Holds fast her office here, can ne'er forget,
Ingenious dreamer, in whose well-told tale
Sweet fiction and sweet truth alike prevail,
Whose humorous vein, strong sense, and simple style,
May teach the gayest, make the gravest smile,
Witty, and well employed, and like thy Lord
Speaking in parables his slighted word,—
I name thee not, lest so despised a name
Should move a sneer at thy deserved fame,
Yet even in transitory life's late day
That mingles all my brown with sober gray,
Revere the man, whose *Pilgrim* marks the road
And guides the *Progress* of the soul to God.
'Twere well with most, if books that could engage
Their childhood, pleased them at a riper age;
The man approving what had charm'd the boy,
Would die at last in comfort, peace, and joy,
And not with curses on his art who stole
The gem of truth from his unguarded soul.
The stamp of artless piety impress'd
By kind tuition on his yielding breast,

The youth now bearded, and yet pert and raw,
Regards with scorn, though once received with awe,
And warp'd into the labyrinth of lies
That babblers, called philosophers, devise,
Blasphemes his creed as founded on a plan
Replete with dreams, unworthy of a man.
Touch but his nature in its ailing part,
Assert the native evil of his heart,
His pride resents the charge, although the proof[1]
Rise in his forehead, and seem rank enough;
Point to the cure, describe a Saviour's cross
As God's expedient to retrieve his loss,
The young apostate sickens at the view,
And hates it with the malice of a Jew.

How weak the barrier of mere nature proves
Opposed against the pleasures nature loves!
While self-betray'd, and wilfully undone,
She longs to yield, no sooner wooed than won.
Try now the merits of this blest exchange
Of modest truth for wit's eccentric range.
Time was, he closed as he began the day
With decent duty, not ashamed to pray;
The practice was a bond upon his heart,
A pledge he gave for a consistent part,
Nor could he dare presumptuously displease
A power confess'd so lately on his knees.
But now, farewell all lengendary tales,
The shadows fly, philosophy prevails,
Prayer to the winds and caution to the waves,
Religion makes the free by nature slaves,

[1] See Chron. xxvi. 19.

Priests have invented, and the world admired
What knavish priests promulgate as inspired,
'Till reason, now no longer overawed,
Resumes her powers, and spurns the clumsy fraud,
And common sense diffusing real day,
The meteor of the gospel dies away.
Such rhapsodies our shrewd discerning youth
Learn from expert enquirers after truth,
Whose only care, might truth presume to speak,
Is not to find what they profess to seek.
And thus well tutor'd only while we share
A mother's lectures and a nurse's care,
And taught at schools much mythologic stuff[2],
But sound religion sparingly enough,
Our early notices of truth disgraced
Soon lose their credit, and are all effaced.
Would you your son should be a sot or dunce,
Lascivious, headstrong, or all these at once,
That in good time, the stripling's finish'd taste
For loose expense and fashionable waste
Should prove your ruin, and his own at last,
Train him in public with a mob of boys,
Childish in mischief only and in noise,
Else of a mannish growth, and five in ten
In infidelity and lewdness, men.
There shall he learn ere sixteen winters old,
That authors are most useful, pawn'd or sold,

[2] The author begs leave to explain; sensible that without such knowledge, neither the ancient poets nor historians can be tasted or indeed understood, he does not mean to censure the pains that are taken to instruct a school-boy in the religion of the heathen, but merely that neglect of Christian culture which leaves him shamefully ignorant of his own.

That pedantry is all that schools impart,
But taverns teach the knowledge of the heart;
There waiter Dick with Bacchanalian lays
Shall win his heart and have his drunken praise,
His counsellor and bosom friend shall prove,
And some street-pacing harlot his first love.
Schools, unless discipline were doubly strong,
Detain their adolescent charge too long.
The management of Tiro's of eighteen
Is difficult, their punishment obscene.
The stout tall Captain, whose superior size
The minor heroes view with envious eyes,
Becomes their pattern, upon whom they fix
Their whole attention, and ape all his tricks.
His pride that scorns to obey or to submit,
With them is courage, his effrontery wit;
His wild excursions, window-breaking feats,
Robbery of gardens, quarrels in the streets,
His hair-breadth 'scapes, and all his daring schemes,
Transport them and are made their favourite themes.
In little bosoms such achievements strike
A kindred spark, they burn to do the like.
Thus half accomplish'd, ere he yet begin
To show the peeping down upon his chin,
And as maturity of years comes on
Made just the adept that you designed your son,
To insure the perseverance of his course,
And give your monstrous project all its force,
Send him to college. If he there be tamed,
Or in one article of vice reclaimed,
Where no regard of ord'nances is shown,
Or look'd for now, the fault must be his own.

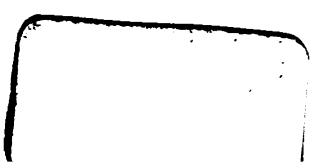
Some sneaking virtue lurks in him no doubt,
Where neither strumpet's charms nor drinking-bout,
Nor gambliug practices can find it out.
Such youths of spirit, and that spirit too,
Ye nurseries of our boys, we owe to you.
Though from ourselves the mischief more proceeds,
For public schools 'tis public folly feeds.
The slaves of custom and establish'd mode,
With pack-horse constancy we keep the road
Crooked or straight, through quags or thorny dells,
True to the jingling of our leader's bells.
To follow foolish precedents, and wink
With both our eyes, is easier than to think,
And such an age as ours baulks no expense
Except of caution and of common sense;
Else, sure, notorious fact and proof so plain
Would turn our steps into a wiser train.
I blame not those who with what care they can
O'erwatch the numerous and unruly clan,
Or if I blame, 'tis only that they dare
Promise a work of which they must despair.
Have ye, ye sage intendants of the whole,
An ubiquarian presence and controul,
Elisha's eye, that when Gehazi stray'd
Went with him, and saw all the game he play'd?
Yes, ye are conscious; and on all the shelves
Your pupils strike upon, have struck yourselves.
Or if by nature sober, ye had then,
Boys as ye were, the gravity of men,
Ye knew at least, by constant proofs address'd
To ears and eyes, the vices of the rest.

But ye connive at what ye cannot cure,
And evils not to be endured, endure,
Lest power exerted, but without success,
Should make the little ye retain still less.
Ye once were justly famed for bringing forth
Undoubted scholarship and genuine worth,
And in the firmament of fame still shines
A glory bright as that of all the signs
Of poets raised by you, and statesmen and divines.
Peace to them all, those brilliant times are fled,
And no such lights are kindling in their stead.
Our striplings shine indeed, but with such rays
As set the midnight riot in a blaze,
And seem, if judged by their expressive looks,
Deeper in none than in their surgeons' books.
Say, Muse, (for education made the song,
No Muse can hesitate or linger long,)
What causes move us, knowing as we must
That these *Menageries* all fail their trust,
To send our sons to scout and scamper there,
While colts and puppies cost us so much care?
Be it a weakness, it deserves some praise,
We love the play-place of our early days.
The scene is touching, and the heart is stone
That feels not at that sight, and feels at none.
The wall on which we tried our graving skill,
The very name we carved subsisting still,
The bench on which we sat while deep-employ'd
Though mangled, hack'd and hew'd, not yet destroy'd;
The little ones unbutton'd, glowing hot,
Playing our games, and on the very spot,

As happy as we once, to kneel and draw
The chalky ring, and knuckle down at taw,
To pitch the ball into the grounded hat,
Or drive it devious with a dexterous pat;
The pleasing spectacle at once excites
Such recollection of our own delights,
That viewing it, we seem almost to obtain
Our innocent sweet simple years again.
This fond attachment to the well-known place
Whence first we started into life's long race,
Maintains its hold with such unfailing sway,
We feel it even in age, and at our latest day.
Hark! how the sire of chits, whose future share
Of classic food begins to be his care,
With his own likeness placed on either knee,
Indulges all a father's heart-felt glee,
And tells them as he strokes their silver locks,
That they must soon learn Latin and to box;
Then turning, he regales his listening wife
With all the adventures of his early life,
His skill in coachmanship or driving chaise,
In bilking tavern bills and spouting plays,
What shifts he used detected in a scrape,
How he was flogg'd, or had the luck to escape,
What sums he lost at play, and how he sold
Watch, seals, and all, till all his pranks are told.
Retracing thus his *frolics*, ('tis a name
That palliates deeds of folly and of shame,)
He gives the local bias all its sway,
Resolves that where he play'd his sons shall play,
And destines their bright genius to be shown
Just in the scene where he display'd his own.

The meek and bashful boy will soon be taught
To be as bold and forward as he ought;
The rude will scuffle through with ease enough,
Great schools suit best the sturdy and the rough.
Ah happy designation, prudent choice,
The' event is sure, expect it and rejoice!
Soon see your wish fulfilled in either child,
The pert made perter, and the tame made wild.
The great indeed, by titles, riches, birth,
Excused the encumbrance of more solid worth,
Are best disposed of, where with most success
They may acquire that confident address,
Those habits of profuse and lewd expense,
That scorn of all delights but those of sense,
Which though in plain plebeians we condemn,
With so much reason all expect from them.
But families of less illustrious fame,
Whose chief distinction is their spotless name,
Whose heirs, their honours none, their income small,
Must shine by true desert, or not at all,
What dream they of, that with so little care
They risk their hopes, their dearest treasure there?
They dream of little Charles or William graced
With wig prolix, down-flowing to his waist;
They see the attentive crowds his talents draw,
They hear him speak—the oracle of law.
The father who designs his babe a priest,
Dreams him episcopally such at least,
And while the playful jockey scours the room
Briskly, astride upon the parlour broom,
In fancy sees him more superbly ride
In coach with purple lined, and mitres on its side.

Events improbable and strange as these,
Which only a parental eye foresees,
A public school shall bring to pass with ease.
But how? resides such virtue in that air
As must create an appetite for prayer?
And will it breathe into him all the zeal
That candidates for such a prize should feel,
To take the lead and be the foremost still
In all true worth and literary skill?
" Ah blind to bright futurity, untaught
The knowledge of the world, and dull of thought!
Church-ladders are not always mounted best
By learned Clerks and Latinists profess'd.
The exalted prize demands an upward look,
Not to be found by poring on a book.
Small skill in Latin, and still less in Greek,
Is more than adequate to all I seek;
Let erudition grace him or not grace,
I give the bauble but the second place;
His wealth, fame, honours, all that I intend,
Subsist and centre in one point, a friend.
A friend, whate'er he studies or neglects,
Shall give him consequence, heal all defects;
His intercourse with peers and sons of peers,—
There dawns the splendour of his future years,
In that bright quarter his propitious skies
Shall blush betimes, and there his glory rise.
Your Lordship and *your Grace*, what school can teach
A rhetoric equal to those parts of speech?
What need of Homer's verse, or Tully's prose,
Sweet interjections! if he learn but those?



Let reverend churls his ignorance rebuke,
Who starve upon a dog's-ear'd Pentateuch,
The parson knows enough who knows a Duke."—
Egregious purpose! worthily begun
In barbarous prostitution of your son,
Pressed on *his* part by means that would disgrace
A scrivener's clerk or footman out of place,
And ending, if at last its end be gain'd,
In sacrilege, in God's own house profaned.
It may succeed; and if his sins should call
For more than common punishment, it shall.
The wretch shall rise, and be the thing on earth
Least qualified in honour, learning, worth,
To occupy a sacred, aweful post,
In which the best and worthiest tremble most.
The *royal letters* are a thing of course,
A king that would might recommend his horse,
And Deans no doubt and Chapters, with one voice,
As bound in duty, would confirm the choice.
Behold your Bishop! well he plays his part,
Christian in name, and infidel in heart,
Ghostly in office, earthly in his plan,
A slave at court, elsewhere a lady's man,
Dumb as a senator, and as a priest
A piece of mere church-furniture at best;
To live estranged from God his total scope,
And his end sure, without one glimpse of hope.
But fair although and feasible it seem,
Depend not much upon your golden dream;
For Providence that seems concern'd to exempt
The hallowed bench from absolute contempt,

In spite of all the wrigglers into place,
Still keeps a seat or two for worth and grace;
And therefore 'tis, that, though the sight be rare,
We sometimes see a Lowth or Bagot there.
Besides, school-friendships are not always found,
Though fair in promise, permanent and sound.
The most disinterested and virtuous minds
In early years connected, time unbinds;
New situations give a different cast
Of habit, inclination, temper, taste,
And he that seem'd our counterpart at first,
Soon shows the strong similitude reversed.
Young heads are giddy, and young hearts are warm,
And make mistakes for manhood to reform.
Boys are at best but pretty buds unblown,
Whose scent and hues are rather guess'd than known.
Each dreams that each is just what he appears,
But learns his error in maturer years,
When disposition, like a sail unfurl'd,
Shows all its rents and patches to the world.
If therefore, even when honest in design,
A boyish friendship may so soon decline,
'Twere wiser sure to inspire a little heart
With just abhorrence of so mean a part,
Than set your son to work at a vile trade
For wages so unlikely to be paid.
  Our public hives of puerile resort
That are of chief and most approved report,
To such base hopes in many a sordid soul
Owe their repute in part, but not the whole.
A principle, whose proud pretensions pass
Unquestion'd, though the jewel be but glass,

That with a world not often over-nice
Ranks as a virtue, and is yet a vice,
Or rather a gross compound, justly tried,
Of envy, hatred, jealousy, and pride,
Contributes most perhaps to enhance their fame,
And Emulation is its specious name.
Boys once on fire with that contentious zeal
Feel all the rage that female rivals feel,
The prize of beauty in a woman's eyes
Not brighter than in theirs the scholar's prize.
The spirit of that competition burns
With all varieties of ill by turns,
Each vainly magnifies his own success,
Resents his fellow's, wishes it were less,
Exults in his miscarriage if he fail,
Deems his reward too great if he prevail,
And labours to surpass him day and night,
Less for improvement, than to tickle spite.
The spur is powerful, and I grant its force;
It pricks the genius forward in its course,
Allows short time for play, and none for sloth,
And felt alike by each, advances both,
But judge where so much evil intervenes,
The end, though plausible, not worth the means.
Weigh, for a moment, classical desert
Against a heart depraved and temper hurt,
Hurt too perhaps for life, for early wrong
Done to the nobler part, affects it long,
And you are staunch indeed in learning's cause,
If you can crown a discipline that draws
Such mischiefs after it, with much applause.

Connexion form'd for interest, and endear'd
By selfish views, thus censured and cashier'd,
And emulation, as engendering hate,
Doom'd to a no less ignominious fate,
The props of such proud seminaries fall,
The JACHIN and the BOAZ of them all.
Great schools rejected then, as those that swell
Beyond a size that can be managed well,
Shall royal institutions miss the bays,
And small academies win all the praise?
Force not my drift beyond its just intent,
I praise a school as Pope a government;
So take my judgement in his language dress'd,
"Whate'er is best administer'd, is best."
Few boys are born with talents that excel,
But all are capable of living well.
Then ask not, whether limited or large,
But, watch they strictly or neglect their charge?
If anxious only that their boys may *learn*,
While *Morals* languish, a despised concern,
The great and small deserve one common blame,
Different in size, but in effect the same.
Much zeal in virtue's cause all teachers boast,
Though motives of mere lucre sway the most.
Therefore in towns and cities they abound,
For there, the game they seek is easiest found,
Though there, in spite of all that care can do,
Traps to catch youth are most abundant too.
If shrewd, and of a well-constructed brain,
Keen in pursuit, and vigorous to retain,
Your son come forth a prodigy of skill,
As wheresoever taught, so form'd, he will,

The pædagogue, with self-complacent air,
Claims more than half the praise as his due share;
But if with all his genius he betray,
Not more intelligent, than loose and gay,
Such vicious habits as disgrace his name,
Threaten his health, his fortune, and his fame,
Though want of due restraint alone have bred
The symptoms that you see with so much dread,
Unenvied there, he may sustain alone
The whole reproach, the fault was all his own.
Oh 'tis a sight to be with joy perused
By all whom sentiment has not abused,
New-fangled sentiment, the boasted grace
Of those who never feel in the right place,
A sight surpassed by none that we can show,
Though Vestris on one leg still shine below,
A father blest with an ingenuous son,
Father and friend and tutor all in one.
How? turn again to tales long since forgot,
Æsop and Phædrus and the rest?—why not?
He will not blush that has a father's heart,
To take in childish plays a childish part,
But bends his sturdy back to any toy
That youth takes pleasure in, to please his boy;
Then why resign into a stranger's hand
A task as much within your own command,
That God and nature and your interest too
Seem with one voice to delegate to you?
Why hire a lodging in a house unknown
For one whose tenderest thoughts all hover round your own?

This second weaning, needless as it is,
How does it lacerate both your heart and his!
The indented stick that loses day by day
Notch after notch, till all are smooth'd away,
Bears witness long ere his dismission come,
With what intense desire he wants his home.
But though the joys he hopes beneath your roof
Bid fair enough to answer in the proof,
Harmless and safe and natural as they are,
A disappointment waits him even there:
Arrived, he feels an unexpected change,
He blushes, hangs his head, is shy and strange,
No longer takes, as once, with fearless ease
His favourite stand between his father's knees,
But seeks the corner of some distant seat,
And eyes the door, and watches a retreat,
And least familiar where he should be most,
Feels all his happiest privileges lost.
Alas, poor boy!—the natural effect
Of love by absence chilled into respect.
Say, what accomplishments at school acquired
Brings he to sweeten fruits so undesired?
Thou well deservest an alienated son,
Unless thy conscious heart acknowledge—none;
None that in thy domestic snug recess,
He had not made his own with more address,
Though some perhaps that shock thy feeling mind,
And better never learn'd, or left behind.
Add too, that thus estranged thou canst obtain
By no kind arts his confidence again,
That here begins with most that long complaint
Of filial frankness lost, and love grown faint,

Which, oft neglected in life's waning years,
A parent pours into regardless ears.
Like caterpillars dangling under trees
By slender threads, and swinging in the breeze,
Which filthily bewray and sore disgrace
The boughs in which are bred the unseemly race,
While every worm industriously weaves
And winds his web about the rivell'd leaves;
So numerous are the follies that annoy
The mind and heart of every sprightly boy,
Imaginations noxious and perverse,
Which admonition can alone disperse.
The encroaching nuisance asks a faithful hand,
Patient, affectionate, of high command,
To check the procreation of a breed
Sure to exhaust the plant on which they feed.
'Tis not enough that Greek or Roman page
At stated hours his freakish thoughts engage,
Even in his pastimes he requires a friend
To warn, and teach him safely to unbend,
O'er all his pleasures gently to preside,
Watch his emotions and controul their tide,
And levying thus, and with an easy sway,
A tax of profit from his very play,
To impress a value not to be erased
On moments squander'd else, and running all to waste.
And seems it nothing in a father's eye
That unimproved those many moments fly?
And is he well content, his son should find
No nourishment to feed his growing mind
But conjugated verbs, and nouns declined?

For such is all the mental food purvey'd
By public hackneys in the schooling trade,
Who feed a pupil's intellect with store
Of syntax truly, but with little more,
Dismiss their cares when they dismiss their flock,
Machines themselves, and govern'd by a clock.
Perhaps a father blest with any brains
Would deem it no abuse or waste of pains,
To improve this diet at no great expense,
With savoury truth and wholesome common sense,
To lead his son for prospects of delight
To some not steep though philosophic height,
Thence to exhibit to his wondering eyes
Yon circling worlds, their distance, and their size,
The moons of Jove and Saturn's belted ball,
And the harmonious order of them all;
To show him in an insect or a flower,
Such microscopic proofs of skill and power,
As hid from ages past, God now displays
To combat Atheists with in modern days;
To spread the earth before him, and commend,
With designation of the finger's end,
Its various parts to his attentive note,
Thus bringing home to him the most remote;
To teach his heart to glow with generous flame
Caught from the deeds of men of ancient fame,
And more than all, with commendation due
To set some living worthy in his view,
Whose fair example may at once inspire
A wish to copy what he must admire.
Such knowledge gain'd betimes, and which appears,
Though solid, not too weighty for his years,

Sweet in itself, and not forbidding sport,
When health demands it, of athletic sort,
Would make him what some lovely boys have been,
And more than one perhaps that I have seen,
An evidence and reprehension both
Of the mere school-boy's lean and tardy growth.
Art thou a man professionally tied,
With all thy faculties elsewhere applied,
Too busy to intend a meaner care
Than how to enrich thyself, and next, thine heir;
Or art thou (as though rich, perhaps thou art,)
But poor in knowledge, having none to impart,—
Behold that figure, neat, though plainly clad,
His sprightly mingled with a shade of sad,
Not of a nimble tongue, though now and then
Heard to articulate like other men,
No jester, and yet lively in discourse,
His phrase well chosen, clear, and full of force,
And his address, if not quite French in ease,
Not English stiff, but frank and form'd to please,
Low in the world because he scorns its arts,
A man of letters, manners, morals, parts,
Unpatronized, and therefore little known,
Wise for himself and his few friends alone,
In him, thy well-appointed proxy see,
Armed for a work too difficult for thee,
Prepared by taste, by learning, and true worth,
To form thy son, to strike his genius forth,
Beneath thy roof, beneath thine eye to prove
The force of discipline when back'd by love,
To double all thy pleasure in thy child,
His mind informed, his morals undefiled.

Safe under such a wing, the boy shall show
No spots contracted among grooms below,
Nor taint his speech with meannesses design'd
By footman Tom for witty and refined.
There,—in his commerce with the liveried herd
Lurks the contagion chiefly to be fear'd.
For since (so fashion dictates) all who claim
An higher than a mere plebeian fame,
Find it expedient, come what mischief may,
To entertain a thief or two in pay,
And they that can afford the expense of more,
Some half a dozen, and some half a score,
Great cause occurs to save him from a band
So sure to spoil him, and so near at hand,
A point secured, if once he be supplied
With some such Mentor always at his side.
Are such men rare? perhaps they would abound
Were occupation easier to be found,
Were education, else so sure to fail,
Conducted on a manageable scale,
And schools that have outlived all just esteem,
Exchanged for the secure domestic scheme.
But having found him, be thou duke or earl,
Show thou hast sense enough to prize the pearl,
And as thou wouldst the advancement of thine heir
In all good faculties beneath his care,
Respect, as is but rational and just,
A man deem'd worthy of so dear a trust.
Despised by thee, what more can he expect
From youthful folly, than the same neglect?
A flat and fatal negative obtains
That instant, upon all his future pains;

Sweet in itself, and not forbidding sport,
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From youthful folly, than the same neglect?
A flat and fatal negative obtains
That instant, upon all his future pains;

His lessons tire, his mild rebukes offend,
And all the instructions of thy son's best friend
Are a stream choaked, or trickling to no end.
Doom him not then to solitary meals,
But recollect that he has sense, and feels,
And, that possessor of a soul refined,
An upright heart and cultivated mind,
His post not mean, his talents not unknown,
He deems it hard to vegetate alone.
And if admitted at thy board he sit,
Account him no just mark for idle wit,
Offend not him whom modesty restrains
From repartee, with jokes that he disdains,
Much less transfix his feelings with an oath,
Nor frown, unless he vanish with the cloth,—
And trust me, his utility may reach
To more than he is hired or bound to teach,
Much trash unutter'd and some ills undone,
Through reverence of the censor of thy son.
But if thy table be indeed unclean,
Foul with excess, and with discourse obscene,
And thou a wretch, whom, following her old plan,
The world accounts an honourable man,
Because forsooth thy courage has been tried,
And stood the test, perhaps on the wrong side,
Though thou hadst never grace enough to prove
That any thing but vice could win thy love;
Or hast thou a polite, card-playing wife,
Chained to the routs that she frequents, for life,
Who, just when industry begins to snore,
Flies, wing'd with joy, to some coach-crowded door,

And thrice in every winter throngs thine own
With half the chariots and sedans in town,
Thyself meanwhile e'en shifting as thou mayst,
Not very sober though, nor very chaste;
Or is thine house, though less superb thy rank,
If not a scene of pleasure, a mere blank,
And thou at best, and in thy soberest mood,
A trifler, vain, and empty of all good?
Though mercy for thyself thou canst have none,
Hear nature plead, show mercy to thy son.
Saved from his home, where every day brings forth
Some mischief fatal to his future worth,
Find him a better in a distant spot,
Within some pious pastor's humble cot,
Where vile example (your's I chiefly mean,
The most seducing and the oftenest seen,)
May never more be stamp'd upon his breast,
Not yet perhaps incurably impress'd.
Where early rest makes early rising sure,
Disease or comes not, or finds easy cure,
Prevented much by diet neat and plain,
Or if it enter, soon starved out again.
Where all the attention of his faithful host
Discreetly limited to two at most,
May raise such fruits as shall reward his care,
And not at last evaporate in air.
Where stillness aiding study, and his mind
Serene, and to his duties much inclined,
Not occupied in day-dreams, as at home,
Of pleasures past or follies yet to come,
His virtuous toil may terminate at last
In settled habit and decided taste.

But whom do I advise? the fashion-led,
The incorrigibly wrong, the deaf, the dead,
Whom care and cool deliberation suit
Not better much than spectacles a brute;
Who if their sons some slight tuition share,
Deem it of no great moment, whose, or where,
Too proud to adopt the thoughts of one unknown,
And much too gay to have any of their own.
But courage, man! methought the Muse replied,
Mankind are various, and the world is wide;
The ostrich, silliest of the feather'd kind,
And form'd of God without a parent's mind,
Commits her eggs, incautious, to the dust,
Forgetful that the foot may crush the trust;
And while on public nurseries they rely,
Not knowing, and too oft not caring why,
Irrational in what they thus prefer,
No few, that would seem wise, resemble her.
But all are not alike. Thy warning voice
May here and there prevent erroneous choice,
And some perhaps, who, busy as they are,
Yet make their progeny their dearest care,
Whose hearts will ache once told what ills may reach
Their offspring left upon so wild a beach,
Will need no stress of argument to enforce
The expedience of a less adventurous course.
The rest will slight thy counsel, or condemn;
But *they* have human feelings. Turn to *them*.

To you then, tenants of life's middle state,
Securely placed between the small and great,
Whose character, yet undebauch'd, retains
Two thirds of all the virtue that remains,

Who wise yourselves, desire your sons should learn
Your wisdom and your ways—to you I turn.
Look round you on a world perversely blind,
See what contempt is fallen on human kind;
See wealth abused, and dignities misplaced,
Great titles, offices, and trusts disgraced,
Long lines of ancestry renown'd of old,
Their noble qualities all quench'd and cold;
See Bedlam's closeted and handcuff'd charge
Surpass'd in frenzy by the mad at large;
See great commanders making war a trade,
Great lawyers, lawyers without study made,
Churchmen, in whose esteem their blest employ
Is odious, and their wages all their joy,
Who far enough from furnishing their shelves
With gospel lore, turn infidels themselves;
See womanhood despised, and manhood shamed
With infamy too nauseous to be named,
Fops at all corners, lady-like in mien,
Civeted fellows, smelt ere they are seen,
Else coarse and rude in manners, and their tongue
On fire with curses and with nonsense hung,
Now flush'd with drunkenness, now with whoredom pale,
Their breath a sample of last night's regale;
See volunteers in all the vilest arts
Men well endowed, of honourable parts,
Design'd by nature wise, but self-made fools;
All these, and more like these, were bred at schools.
And if it chance, as sometimes chance it will,
That though school bred, the boy be virtuous still,
Such rare exceptions shining in the dark,
Prove rather than impeach the just remark,

As here and there a twinkling star descried
Serves but to show how black is all beside.
Now look on him whose very voice in tone
Just echoes thine, whose features are thine own,
And stroke his polish'd cheek of purest red,
And lay thine hand upon his flaxen head,
And say, my boy, the unwelcome hour is come,
When thou, transplanted from thy genial home,
Must find a colder soil and bleaker air,
And trust for safety to a stranger's care;
What character, what turn thou wilt assume
From constant converse with I know not whom,
Who there will court thy friendship, with what views,
And, artless as thou art, whom thou wilt chuse,
Though much depends on what thy choice shall be,
Is all chance-medley and unknown to me.
Canst thou, the tear just trembling on thy lids,
And while the dreadful risk foreseen, forbids,
Free too, and under no constraining force,
Unless the sway of custom warp thy course,
Lay such a stake upon the losing side,
Merely to gratify so blind a guide?
Thou canst not: Nature pulling at thine heart
Condemns the unfatherly, the imprudent part.
Thou wouldst not, deaf to Nature's tenderest plea,
Turn him adrift upon a rolling sea,
Nor say, *go thither*, conscious that there lay
A brood of asps, or quicksands in his way;
Then only govern'd by the self-same rule
Of natural pity, send him not to school.
No!—Guard him better: Is he not thine own,
Thyself in miniature, thy flesh, thy bone?

And hopest thou not ('tis every father's hope)
That since thy strength must with thy years elope,
And thou wilt need some comfort to assuage
Health's last farewell, a staff of thine old age,
That then, in recompense of all thy cares,
Thy child shall show respect to thy grey hairs,
Befriend thee, of all other friends bereft,
And give thy life its only cordial left?
Aware then how much danger intervenes,
To compass that good end, forecast the means.
His heart, now passive, yields to thy command;
Secure it thine. Its key is in thine hand.
If thou desert thy charge and throw it wide,
Nor heed what guests there enter and abide,
Complain not if attachments lewd and base
Supplant thee in it, and usurp thy place.
But if thou guard its secret chambers sure
From vicious inmates and delights impure,
Either his gratitude shall hold him fast,
And keep him warm and filial to the last,
Or if he prove unkind, (as who can say
But being man, and therefore frail, he may,)
One comfort yet shall cheer thine aged heart,
Howe'er he slight thee, thou hast done thy part.
Oh barbarous! wouldst thou with a Gothic hand
Pull down the schools—what!—all the schools i' the land?
Or throw them up to livery-nags and grooms?
Or turn them into shops and auction rooms?
—A captious question, Sir, and yours is one,
Deserves an answer similar, or none.

Wouldst thou, possessor of a flock, employ
(Apprized that he is such) a careless boy,
And feed him well, and give him handsome pay,
Merely to sleep, and let them run astray?
Survey our schools and colleges, and see
A sight not much unlike my simile.
From education, as the leading cause,
The public character its colour draws,
Thence the prevailing manners take their cast,
Extravagant or sober, loose or chaste.
And though I would not advertise them yet,
Nor write on each—*This Building to be let*,
Unless the world were all prepared to embrace
A plan well worthy to supply their place,
Yet backward as they are, and long have been,
To cultivate and keep the MORALS clean,
(Forgive the crime) I wish them, I confess,
Or better managed, or encouraged less.

THE

DIVERTING HISTORY

OF

JOHN GILPIN,

SHOWING HOW HE WENT FARTHER THAN HE INTENDED, AND CAME SAFE HOME AGAIN.

JOHN GILPIN was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A train-band Captain eke was he
Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,
—Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
No holiday have seen.

To-morrow is our wedding-day,
And we will then repair
Unto the Bell at Edmonton,
All in a chaise and pair.

My sister and my sister's child,
Myself and children three
Will fill the chaise, so you must ride
On horseback after we.

He soon replied—I do admire
Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear,
Therefore it shall be done.

I am a linen-draper bold,
As all the world doth know,
And my good friend the Callender
Will lend his horse to go.

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin—That's well said;
And for that wine is dear,
We will be furnish'd with our own,
Which is both bright and clear.

John Gilpin kiss'd his loving wife,
O'erjoyed was he to find
That though on pleasure she was bent,
She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
But yet was not allow'd
To drive up to the door, lest all
Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stay'd,
Where they did all get in,
Six precious souls, and all agog
To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheel,
Were never folk so glad,
The stones did rattle underneath
As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin at his horse's side
Seized fast the flowing mane,
And up he got in haste to ride,
But soon came down again.

For saddle-tree scarce reach'd had he,
His journey to begin,
When turning round his head he saw
Three customers come in.

So down he came, for loss of time
Although it grieved him sore,
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,
Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers
Were suited to their mind,
When Betty screaming came down stairs,
"The wine is left behind."

Good lack! quoth he, yet bring it me,
My leathern belt likewise
In which I bear my trusty sword
When I do exercise.

Now Mistress Gilpin, careful soul,
Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she loved,
And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,
Through which the belt he drew,
And hung a bottle on each side
To make his balance true.

Then over all, that he might be
Equipp'd from top to toe,
His long red cloak well brush'd and neat
He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again
  Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones
  With caution and good heed.

But finding soon a smoother road
  Beneath his well-shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot,
  Which gall'd him in his seat.

So, Fair and softly, John he cried,
  But John he cried in vain,
That trot became a gallop soon
  In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must
  Who cannot sit upright,
He grasp'd the mane with both his hands
  And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
  Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got
  Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin neck or nought,
  Away went hat and wig,
He little dreamt when he set out
  Of running such a rig.

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
  Like streamer long and gay,
Till loop and button failing both
  At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern
The bottles he had slung,
A bottle swinging at each side
As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children scream'd,
Up flew the windows all,
And every soul cried out, Well done!
As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he;
His fame soon spread around—
He carries weight, he rides a race,
'Tis for a thousand pound.

And still as fast as he drew near,
'Twas wonderful to view
How in a trice the turnpike-men
Their gates wide open threw.

And now as he went bowing down
His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Were shatter'd at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road
Most piteous to be seen,
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke
As they had basted been.

But still he seem'd to carry weight,
With leathern girdle braced,
For all might see the bottle necks
Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington
These gambols he did play,
And till he came unto the Wash
Of Edmonton so gay.

And there he threw the wash about
On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild-goose at play.

At Edmonton his loving wife
From the balcony spied
Her tender husband, wondering much
To see how he did ride.

Stop, stop, John Gilpin!—Here's the house—
They all at once did cry,
The dinner waits and we are tired:
Said Gilpin—so am I.

But yet his horse was not a whit
Inclined to tarry there,
For why? his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew
Shot by an archer strong,
So did he fly—which brings me to
The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin, out of breath,
And sore against his will,
Till at his friend's the Callender's
His horse at last stood still.

The Callender amazed to see
His neighbour in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
And thus accosted him—

What news? what news? your tidings tell,
Tell me you must and shall—
Say why bare-headed you are come,
Or why you come at all?

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit
And loved a timely joke,
And thus unto the Callender
In merry guise he spoke—

I came because your horse would come;
And if I well forebode,
My hat and wig will soon be here,
They are upon the road.

The Callender, right glad to find
His friend in merry pin,
Return'd him not a single word,
But to the house went in.

Whence straight he came with hat and wig,
A wig that flow'd behind,
A hat not much the worse for wear,
Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and in his turn
Thus show'd his ready wit,
—My head is twice as big as yours,
They therefore needs must fit.

But let me scrape the dirt away
That hangs upon your face;
And stop and eat, for well you may
Be in a hungry case.

Said John—It is my wedding-day,
And all the world would stare,
If wife should dine at Edmonton
And I should dine at Ware.

So turning to his horse, he said,
I am in haste to dine,
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
You shall go back for mine.

Ah luckless speech, and bootless boast!
For which he paid full dear,
For while he spake a braying ass
Did sing most loud and clear.

Whereat his horse did snort as he
Had heard a lion roar,
And gallop'd off with all his might
As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went Gilpin's hat and wig;
He lost them sooner than at first,
For why? they were too big.

Now Mistress Gilpin, when she saw
Her husband posting down
Into the country far away,
She pull'd out half a crown;

And thus unto the youth she said
That drove them to the Bell,
This shall be yours when you bring back
My husband safe and well.

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
John coming back amain,
Whom in a trice he tried to stop
By catching at his rein.

But not performing what he meant,
And gladly would have done,
The frighted steed he frighted more
And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went post-boy at his heels,
The post-boy's horse right glad to miss
The lumbering of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With post-boy scampering in the rear,
They raised the hue and cry.

Stop thief, stop thief—a highwayman!
Not one of them was mute,
And all and each that pass'd that way
Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike gates again
Flew open in short space,
The toll-men thinking as before
That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did and won it too,
For he got first to town,
Nor stopp'd till where he had got up
He did again get down.

Now let us sing, Long live the king,
And Gilpin long live he,
And when he next doth ride abroad,
May I be there to see!

THE DISTRESSED TRAVELLERS;

OR,

LABOUR IN VAIN.

An excellent New Song, to a Tune never sung before.

1.

I SING of a journey to Clifton,
We would have perform'd if we could,
Without cart or barrow to lift on
Poor Mary and me through the mud;
Slee sla slud,
Stuck in the mud,
Oh it is pretty to wade through a flood!

2.

So away we went, slipping and sliding,
Hop, hop, *a la mode de deux* frogs.
'Tis near as good walking as riding,
When ladies are dress'd in their clogs.
Wheels, no doubt,
Go briskly about,
But they clatter and rattle, and make such a rout!

3.

SHE.

Well! now I protest it is charming;
How finely the weather improves!
That cloud, though, is rather alarming;
How slowly and stately it moves!

HE.

Pshaw! never mind;
'Tis not in the wind;
We are travelling south, and shall leave it behind.

4.

SHE.

I am glad we are come for an airing,
For folks may be pounded and penn'd,
Until they grow rusty, not caring
To stir half a mile to an end.

HE.

The longer we stay,
The longer we may;
It's a folly to think about weather or way.

5.

SHE.

But now I begin to be frighted:
If I fall, what a way I should roll!
I am glad that the bridge was indicted.—
Stop! stop! I am sunk in a hole!

HE.

Nay, never care!
'Tis a common affair;
You'll not be the last that will set a foot there.

6.

SHE.

Let me breathe now a little, and ponder
On what it were better to do.
That terrible lane, I see yonder,
I think we shall never get through!

HE.

So think I;
But, by the bye,
We never shall know, if we never should try.

7.

SHE.

But should we get there, how shall we get home?
What a terrible deal of bad road we have past,
Slipping and sliding; and if we should come
To a difficult stile, I am ruined at last.
Oh this lane!
Now it is plain
That struggling and striving is labour in vain.

8.

HE.

Stick fast there, while I go and look.

SHE.

Don't go away, for fear I should fall!

HE.

I have examined it every nook,
And what you have here is a sample of all.

Come, wheel round;
The dirt we have found
Would be an estate at a farthing a pound.

9.

Now, Sister Anne, the guitar you must take;
Set it, and sing it, and make it a song.
I have varied the verse for variety sake,
And cut it off short, because it was long.
'Tis hobbling and lame,
Which critics won't blame,
For the sense and the sound, they say, should be the same.

A TALE,

FOUNDED ON A FACT, WHICH HAPPENED IN JANUARY, 1770.

WHERE Humber pours his rich commercial stream,
There dwelt a wretch, who breathed but to blaspheme.
In subterraneous caves his life he led,
Black as the mine, in which he wrought for bread.
When on a day, emerging from the deep,
A sabbath-day, (such sabbaths thousands keep!)
The wages of his weekly toil he bore
To buy a cock—whose blood might win him more;
As if the noblest of the feather'd kind
Were but for battle and for death design'd;
As if the consecrated hours were meant
For sport, to minds on cruelty intent.
It chanced, (such chances Providence obey,)
He met a fellow-labourer on the way,

Whose heart the same desires had once inflamed,
But now the savage temper was reclaim'd.
Persuasion on his lips had taken place;
For all plead well who plead the cause of grace.
His iron-heart with Scripture he assail'd,
Woo'd him to hear a sermon, and prevail'd.
His faithful bow the mighty preacher drew,
Swift as the lightning-glimpse the arrow flew.
He wept; he trembled; cast his eyes around,
To find a worse than he; but none he found.
He felt his sins, and wonder'd he should feel.
Grace made the wound, and grace alone could heal.
Now farewell oaths, and blasphemies, and lies!
He quits the sinner's for the martyr's prize.
That holy day was wash'd with many a tear,
Gilded with hope, yet shaded too by fear.
The next his swarthy brethren of the mine
Learn'd by his alter'd speech, the change divine,
Laugh'd when they should have wept, and swore the day
Was nigh when he would swear as fast as they.
"No," said the penitent: "such words shall share
This breath no more; devoted now to prayer.
O! if thou seest, (thine eye the future sees,)
That I shall yet again blaspheme, like these,
Now strike me to the ground, on which I kneel,
Ere yet this heart relapses into steel;
Now take me to that Heaven I once defied,
Thy presence, thy embrace!"—He spoke and died!

TO THE REV. MR. NEWTON,

ON HIS RETURN FROM RAMSGATE.

Oct. 1780.

THAT ocean you have late survey'd,
Those rocks I too have seen;
But I, afflicted and dismay'd,
You tranquil and serene.

You from the flood-controlling steep
Saw stretch'd before your view,
With conscious joy, the threatening deep,
No longer such to you.

To me, the waves that ceaseless broke
Upon the dangerous coast,
Hoarsely and ominously spoke
Of all my treasure lost.

Your sea of troubles you have past,
And found the peaceful shore;
I, tempest-toss'd, and wreck'd at last,
Come home to port no more.

LOVE ABUSED.

WHAT is there in the vale of life
Half so delightful as a wife,
When friendship, love, and peace combine
To stamp the marriage bond divine?
The stream of pure and genuine love
Derives its current from above;

And earth a second Eden shows,
Where'er the healing water flows:
But ah, if from the dikes and drains
Of sensual Nature's feverish veins,
Lust, like a lawless headstrong flood,
Impregnated with ooze and mud,
Descending fast on every side
Once mingles with the sacred tide,
Farewell the soul-enlivening scene!
The banks that wore a smiling green,
With rank defilement overspread,
Bewail their flowery beauties dead;
The stream polluted, dark, and dull,
Diffused into a Stygian pool,
Through life's last melancholy years
Is fed with ever-flowing tears,
Complaints supply the zephyr's part,
And sighs that heave a breaking heart.

A POETICAL EPISTLE TO LADY AUSTEN,

DEC. 17, 1781.

DEAR ANNA—between friend and friend,
Prose answers every common end;
Serves, in a plain and homely way,
To express the occurrence of the day;
Our health, the weather, and the news,
What walks we take, what books we choose,
And all the floating thoughts we find
Upon the surface of the mind.

But when a poet takes the pen,
Far more alive than other men,
He feels a gentle tingling come
Down to his finger and his thumb,
Derived from nature's noblest part,
The centre of a glowing heart:
And this is what the world, who knows
No flights above the pitch of prose,
His more sublime vagaries slighting,
Denominates an itch for writing.
No wonder I, who scribble rhyme
To catch the triflers of the time,
And tell them truths divine and clear,
Which, couch'd in prose, they will not hear;
Who labour hard to allure and draw
The loiterers I never saw,
Should feel that itching and that tingling
With all my purpose intermingling,
To your intrinsic merit true,
When call'd to address myself to you.

Mysterious are His ways, whose power
Brings forth that unexpected hour,
When minds, that never met before,
Shall meet, unite, and part no more:
It is the' allotment of the skies,
The hand of the Supremely Wise,
That guides and governs our affections,
And plans and orders our connexions:
Directs us in our distant road,
And marks the bounds of our abode.
Thus we were settled when you found us,
Peasants and children all around us,

Not dreaming of so dear a friend,
Deep in the abyss of Silver-End[1].
Thus Martha, even against her will,
Perch'd on the top of yonder hill;
And you, though you must needs prefer
The fairer scenes of sweet Sancerre[2],
Are come from distant Loire, to choose
A cottage on the banks of Ouse.
This page of Providence quite new,
And now just opening to our view,
Employs our present thoughts and pains
To guess, and spell, what it contains:
But day by day, and year by year,
Will make the dark enigma clear;
And furnish us, perhaps, at last,
Like other scenes already past,
With proof, that we, and our affairs,
Are part of a Jehovah's cares:
For God unfolds, by slow degrees,
The purport of his deep decrees;
Sheds every hour a clearer light
In aid of our defective sight;
And spreads, at length, before the soul
A beautiful and perfect whole,
Which busy man's inventive brain
Toils to anticipate, in vain.
Say, Anna, had you never known
The beauties of a rose full blown,

[1] An obscure part of Olney, adjoining to the residence of Cowper, which faced the market-place.

[2] Lady Austen's residence in France.

Could you, though luminous your eye,
By looking on the bud descry,
Or guess, with a prophetic power,
The future splendour of the flower?
Just so, the Omnipotent, who turns
The system of a world's concerns,
From mere minutiæ can educe
Events of most important use,
And bid a dawning sky display
The blaze of a meridian day.
The works of man tend, one and all,
As needs they must, from great to small;
And vanity absorbs at length
The monuments of human strength.
But who can tell how vast the plan
Which this day's incident began?
Too small, perhaps, the slight occasion
For our dim-sighted observation;
It pass'd unnoticed, as the bird
That cleaves the yielding air unheard,
And yet may prove, when understood,
An harbinger of endless good.
Not that I deem, or mean to call
Friendship a blessing cheap or small;
But merely to remark, that ours,
Like some of nature's sweetest flowers,
Rose from a seed of tiny size,
That seem'd to promise no such prize;
A transient visit intervening,
And made almost without a meaning,
(Hardly the effect of inclination,
Much less of pleasing expectation,)

Produced a friendship, then begun,
That has cemented us in one;
And placed it in our power to prove,
By long fidelity and love,
That Solomon has wisely spoken,—
"A threefold cord is not soon broken."

TO THE REV. MR. NEWTON,

RECTOR OF ST. MARY WOOLNOTH,

MAY 28, 1782.

SAYS the Pipe to the Snuff-box, I can't understand
What the ladies and gentlemen see in your face,
That you are in fashion all over the land,
And I am so much fallen into disgrace.

Do but see what a pretty contemplative air
I give to the company,—pray do but note 'em,—
You would think that the wise men of Greece were all there,
Or, at least, would suppose them the wise men of Gotham.

My breath is as sweet as the breath of blown roses,
While you are a nuisance where'er you appear;
There is nothing but sniveling and blowing of noses,
Such a noise as turns any man's stomach to hear.

Then lifting his lid in a delicate way,
And opening his mouth with a smile quite engaging,
The Box in reply was heard plainly to say,—
What a silly dispute is this we are waging!

If you have a little of merit to claim,
You may thank the sweet-smelling Virginian weed;
And I, if I seem to deserve any blame,
The before-mentioned drug in apology plead.

Thus neither the praise nor the blame is our own,
No room for a sneer, much less a *cachinnus;*
We are vehicles, not of tobacco alone,
But of any thing else they may choose to put in us.

THE COLUBRIAD.

1782.

Close by the threshold of a door nail'd fast
Three kittens sat; each kitten look'd aghast;
I passing swift and inattentive by,
At the three kittens cast a careless eye,
Not much concern'd to know what they did there,
Not deeming kittens worth a poet's care.
But presently a loud and furious hiss
Caused me to stop, and to exclaim "What's this?"
When lo! upon the threshold met my view,
With head erect, and eyes of fiery hue,
A viper, long as Count de Grasse's queue.
Forth from his head his forked tongue he throws,
Darting it full against a kitten's nose,
Who having never seen, in field or house,
The like, sat still and silent as a mouse;
Only projecting, with attention due,
Her whisker'd face, she ask'd him, "Who are you?"

On to the hall went I, with pace not slow,
But swift as lightning, for a long Dutch hoe,
With which well arm'd I hasten'd to the spot,
To find the viper,—but I found him not;
And turning up the leaves, and shrubs around,
Found only, that he was not to be found.
But still the kittens, sitting as before,
Sat watching close the bottom of the door.
" I hope," said I, " the villain I would kill
Has slipp'd between the door and the door sill;
And if I make dispatch, and follow hard,
No doubt but I shall find him in the yard;"
For long ere now it should have been rehearsed,
'Twas in the garden that I found him first.
Even there I found him, there the full-grown cat
His head, with velvet paw, did gently pat,
As curious as the kittens erst had been
To learn what this phenomenon might mean.
Fill'd with heroic ardour at the sight,
And fearing every moment he would bite,
And rob our household of our only cat
That was of age to combat with a rat,
With outstretch'd hoe I slew him at the door,
And taught him NEVER TO COME THERE NO MORE.

ON FRIENDSHIP.

Amicitia nisi inter bonos esse non potest.
CICERO.

1782.

WHAT virtue can we name, or grace,
But men unqualified and base
Will boast it their possession?
Profusion apes the noble part
Of liberality of heart,
And dullness of discretion.

But as the gem of richest cost
Is ever counterfeited most,
So, always, imitation
Employs the utmost skill she can
To counterfeit the faithful man,
The friend of long duration.

Some will pronounce me too severe,
But long experience speaks me clear;
Therefore that censure scorning,
I will proceed to mark the shelves
On which so many dash themselves,
And give the simple warning.

Youth, unadmonish'd by a guide,
Will trust to any fair outside,—
An error soon corrected;
For who but learns with riper years,
That man, when smoothest he appears,
Is most to be suspected?

But here again a danger lies,
Lest, thus deluded by our eyes,
And taking trash for treasure,
We should, when undeceived, conclude
Friendship imaginary good,
A mere Utopian pleasure.

An acquisition rather rare
Is yet no subject of despair;
Nor should it seem distressful,
If either on forbidden ground,
Or where it was not to be found,
We sought it unsuccessful.

No friendship will abide the test
That stands on sordid interest
And mean self-love erected;
Nor such as may awhile subsist
'Twixt sensualist and sensualist,
For vicious ends connected.

Who hopes a friend, should have a heart
Himself well furnish'd for the part,
And ready on occasion
To show the virtue that he seeks;
For 'tis an union that bespeaks
A just reciprocation.

A fretful temper will divide
The closest knot that may be tied,
By ceaseless sharp corrosion:
A temper passionate and fierce
May suddenly your joys disperse
At one immense explosion.

In vain the talkative unite
With hope of permanent delight;
The secret just committed
They drop through mere desire to prate,
Forgetting its important weight,
And by themselves outwitted.

How bright soe'er the prospect seems,
All thoughts of friendship are but dreams,
If envy chance to creep in;
An envious man, if you succeed,
May prove a dangerous foe indeed,
But not a friend worth keeping.

As envy pines at good possess'd,
So jealousy looks forth distress'd,
On good that seems approaching,
And if success his steps attend,
Discerns a rival in a friend,
And hates him for encroaching.

Hence authors of illustrious name,
(Unless belied by common fame,)
Are sadly prone to quarrel;
To deem the wit a friend displays
So much of loss to their own praise,
And pluck each other's laurel.

A man renowned for repartee
Will seldom scruple to make free
With friendship's finest feeling;
Will thrust a dagger at your breast,
And tell you 'twas a special jest,
By way of balm for healing.

Beware of tattlers; keep your ear
Close stopt against the tales they hear,—
  Fruits of their own invention;
The separation of chief friends
Is what their kindness most intends;
  Their sport is your dissension.

Friendship that wantonly admits
A joco-serious play of wits
  In brilliant altercation,
Is union such as indicates,
Like hand-in-hand insurance plates,
  Danger of conflagration.

Some fickle creatures boast a soul
True as the needle to the pole;
  Yet shifting, like the weather,
The needle's constancy forego
For any novelty, and show
  Its variations rather.

Insensibility makes some
Unseasonably deaf and dumb,
  When most you need their pity;
'Tis waiting till the tears shall fall
From Gog and Magog in Guildhall,—
  Those playthings of the city.

The great and small but rarely meet
On terms of amity complete:
  The attempt would scarce be madder,
Should any, from the bottom, hope
At one huge stride to reach the top
  Of an erected ladder.

Courtier and patriot cannot mix
Their heterogeneous politics
  Without an effervescence,
Such as of salts with lemon-juice,
But which is rarely known to induce,
  Like that, a coalescence.

Religion should extinguish strife,
And make a calm of human life:
  But even those who differ
Only on topics left at large,
How fiercely will they meet and charge!
  No combatants are stiffer.

To prove, alas! my main intent,
Needs no great cost of argument,
  No cutting and contriving;
Seeking a real friend, we seem
To adopt the chymist's golden dream
  With still less hope of thriving.

Then judge, or ere you choose your man,
As circumspectly as you can,
  And, having made election,
See that no disrespect of yours,
Such as a friend but ill endures,
  Enfeeble his affection.

It is not timber, lead and stone,
An architect requires alone,
  To finish a great building;
The palace were but half complete,
Could he by any chance forget
  The carving and the gilding.

As similarity of mind,
Or something not be defined,
First rivets our attention;
So, manners, decent and polite,
The same we practised at first sight,
Must save it from declension.

The man who hails you Tom or Jack,
And proves by thumping on your back,
His sense of your great merit,
Is such a friend, that one had need
Be very much his friend indeed,
To pardon, or to bear it.

Some friends make this their prudent plan—
"Say little, and hear all you can;"
Safe policy, but hateful;
So barren sands imbibe the shower,
But render neither fruit nor flower,
Unpleasant and ungrateful.

They whisper trivial things, and small;
But, to communicate at all
Things serious, deem improper;
Their feculence and froth they show,
But keep the best contents below,
Just like a simmering copper.

These samples (for alas! at last
These are but samples, and a taste
Of evils yet unmention'd;)
May prove the task, a task indeed,
In which 'tis much, if we succeed,
However well-intention'd.

Pursue the theme, and you shall find
A disciplined and furnish'd mind
To be at least expedient,
And, after summing all the rest,
Religion ruling in the breast
A principal ingredient.

True friendship has, in short, a grace
More than terrestrial in its face,
That proves it Heaven-descended;
Man's love of woman not so pure,
Nor, when sincerest, so secure
To last till life is ended.

TO AN

AFFLICTED PROTESTANT LADY IN FRANCE.

MADAM,

A STRANGER'S purpose in these lays
Is to congratulate and not to praise;
To give the creature the Creator's due
Were sin in me, and an offence to you.
From man to man, or e'en to woman paid,
Praise is the medium of a knavish trade,
A coin by Craft for Folly's use design'd,
Spurious, and only current with the blind.
The path of sorrow, and that path alone
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown:
No traveller ever reach'd that bless'd abode,
Who found not thorns and briers in his road.

The world may dance along the flowery plain,
Cheer'd as they go by many a sprightly strain;
Where Nature has her mossy velvet spread,
With unshod feet they yet securely tread;
Admonish'd, scorn the caution and the friend,
Bent all on pleasure, heedless of its end.
But He, who knew what human hearts would prove,
How slow to learn the dictates of his love,
That, hard by nature and of stubborn will,
A life of ease would make them harder still,
In pity to the souls his grace design'd
To rescue from the ruins of mankind,
Call'd for a cloud to darken all their years,
And said, "Go spend them in the vale of tears!"
O balmy gales of soul-reviving air!
O salutary streams that murmur there!
These flowing from the Fount of Grace above,
Those breathed from lips of everlasting love.
The flinty soil indeed their feet annoys,
Chill blasts of trouble nip their springing joys,
An envious world will interpose its frown
To mar delights superior to its own,
And many a pang experienced still within,
Reminds them of their hated inmate, Sin;
But ills of every shape and every name,
Transform'd to blessings, miss their cruel aim;
And every moment's calm that sooths the breast
Is given in earnest of eternal rest.
Ah, be not sad, although thy lot be cast
Far from the flock, and in a boundless waste!
No shepherd's tents within thy view appear,
But the chief Shepherd even there is near;

Thy tender sorrows and thy plaintive strain
Flow in a foreign land, but not in vain;
Thy tears all issue from a source divine,
And every drop bespeaks a Saviour thine.
So once in Gideon's fleece the dews were found,
And drought on all the drooping herbs around.

THE YEARLY DISTRESS;

OR,

TITHING-TIME AT STOCK IN ESSEX.

VERSES ADDRESSED TO A COUNTRY CLERGYMAN, COMPLAINING OF THE DISAGREEABLENESS OF THE DAY ANNUALLY APPOINTED FOR RECEIVING THE DUES AT THE PARSONAGE.

COME, ponder well, for 'tis no jest,
To laugh it would be wrong;
The troubles of a worthy priest
The burden of my song.

This priest he merry is and blithe
Three quarters of the year,
But oh! it cuts him like a scythe
When tithing-time draws near.

He then is full of frights and fears,
As one at point to die,
And long before the day appears
He heaves up many a sigh.

For then the farmers come, jog, jog,
Along the miry road,
Each heart as heavy as a log,
To make their payments good.

In sooth the sorrow of such days
Is not to be express'd,
When he that takes and he that pays
Are both alike distress'd.

Now all unwelcome at his gates
The clumsy swains alight,
With rueful faces and bald pates;—
He trembles at the sight.

And well he may, for well he knows
Each bumpkin of the clan,
Instead of paying what he owes,
Will cheat him if he can.

So in they come—each makes his leg,
And flings his head before,
And looks as if he came to beg,
And not to quit a score.

"And how does miss and madam do,
The little boy and all?"
"All tight and well. And how do you,
Good Mr. What-d'ye-call?"

The dinner comes, and down they sit:
Were e'er such hungry folk?
There's little talking, and no wit;
It is no time to joke.

One wipes his nose upon his sleeve,
One spits upon the floor,
Yet not to give offence or grieve,
Holds up the cloth before.

The punch goes round, and they are dull
And lumpish still as ever;
Like barrels with their bellies full,
They only weigh the heavier.

At length the busy time begins,
"Come, neighbours, we must wag."
The money chinks, down drop their chins,
Each lugging out his bag.

One talks of mildew and of frost,
And one of storms and hail,
And one of pigs that he has lost
By maggots at the tail.

Quoth one, "A rarer man than you
In pulpit none shall hear;
But yet, methinks, to tell you true,
You sell it plaguey dear."

Oh why are farmers made so coarse,
Or clergy made so fine?
A kick that scarce would move a horse,
May kill a sound divine.

Then let the boobies stay at home;
'Twould cost him, I dare say,
Less trouble taking twice the sum,
Without the clowns that pay.

SONNET TO HENRY COWPER, ESQ.

ON HIS EMPHATICAL AND INTERESTING DELIVERY OF THE DEFENCE OF WARREN HASTINGS, ESQ. IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

COWPER, whose silver voice, task'd sometimes hard,
Legends prolix delivers in the ears
(Attentive when thou read'st) of England's peers,
Let verse at length yield thee thy just reward.

Thou wast not heard with drowsy disregard,
Expending late on all that length of plea
Thy generous powers, but silence honour'd thee,
Mute as e'er gazed on orator or bard.

Thou art not voice alone, but hast beside
Both heart and head: and couldst with music sweet
Of attic phrase and senatorial tone,
Like thy renown'd forefathers, far and wide
Thy fame diffuse, praised not for utterance meet
Of *others'* speech, but magic of *thy own*.

LINES ADDRESSED TO DR. DARWIN,

AUTHOR OF THE "BOTANIC GARDEN."

Two Poets[1], (poets, by report,
Not oft so well agree,)
Sweet harmonist of Flora's court!
Conspire to honour thee.

[1] Alluding to the poem by Mr. Hayley, which accompanied these lines.

They best can judge a poet's worth,
Who oft themselves have known
The pangs of a poetic birth
By labours of their own.

We therefore pleased extol thy song,
Though various yet complete,
Rich in embellishment as strong,
And learned as 'tis sweet.

No envy mingles with our praise;
Though, could our hearts repine
At any poet's happier lays,
They would—they must at thine.

But we, in mutual bondage knit
Of friendship's closest tie,
Can gaze on even Darwin's wit
With an unjaundiced eye;

And deem the Bard, whoe'er he be,
And howsoever known,
Who would not twine a wreath for thee,
Unworthy of his own.

ON

MRS. MONTAGU'S FEATHER HANGINGS.

The Birds put off their every hue,
To dress a room for Montagu.
The Peacock sends his heavenly dyes,
His *rainbows* and his *starry eyes;*

The Pheasant, plumes which round infold
His mantling neck with downy gold;
The Cock his arch'd tail's azure show;
And, river blanch'd, the Swan his snow.
All tribes beside of Indian name,
That glossy shine, or vivid flame,
Where rises and where sets the day,
Whate'er they boast of rich and gay,
Contribute to the gorgeous plan,
Proud to advance it all they can.
This plumage neither dashing shower,
Nor blasts that shake the dripping bower,
Shall drench again or discompose,
But, screen'd from every storm that blows,
It boasts a splendour ever new,
Safe with protecting Montagu.
To the same patroness resort,
Secure of favour at her court,
Strong Genius, from whose forge of thought
Forms rise, to quick perfection wrought,
Which, though newborn, with vigour move,
Like Pallas springing arm'd from Jove;
Imagination scattering round
Wild roses over furrow'd ground,
Which Labour of his frown beguile,
And teach Philosophy a smile;
Wit flashing on Religion's side,
Whose fires, to sacred truth applied,
The gem, though luminous before,
Obtrudes on human notice more,
Like sunbeams on the golden height
Of some tall temple playing bright;

Well-tutor'd Learning, from his books
Dismiss'd with grave, not haughty looks,
Their order on his shelves exact,
Not more harmonious or compact
Than that, to which he keeps confined
The various treasures of his mind;
All these to Montagu's repair,
Ambitious of a shelter there.
There Genius, Learning, Fancy, Wit,
Their ruffled plumage calm refit,
(For stormy troubles loudest roar
Around their flight who highest soar,)
And in her eye, and by her aid,
Shine safe without a fear to fade.
She thus maintains divided sway
With yon bright regent of the day;
The plume and Poet both, we know,
Their lustre to his influence owe;
And she, the works of Phœbus aiding,
Both Poet saves and plume from fading.

ON THE

DEATH OF MRS. THROCKMORTON'S BULLFINCH.

Ye Nymphs, if e'er your eyes were red
With tears o'er hapless favourites shed,
O, share Maria's grief!
Her favourite, even in his cage,
(What will not hunger's cruel rage?)
Assassin'd by a thief.

Where Rhenus strays his vines among,
The egg was laid from which he sprung,
And though by nature mute,
Or only with a whistle bless'd,
Well-taught he all the sounds express'd
Of flageolet or flute.

The honours of his ebon poll
Were brighter than the sleekest mole,
His bosom of the hue
With which Aurora decks the skies,
When piping winds shall soon arise
To sweep away the dew.

Above, below, in all the house,
Dire foe alike of bird and mouse,
No cat had leave to dwell;
And Bully's cage supported stood
On props of smoothest-shaven wood,
Large built and latticed well.

Well latticed,—but the grate, alas!
Not rough with wire of steel or brass,
For Bully's plumage sake,
But smooth with wands from Ouse's side,
With which, when neatly peel'd and dried,
The swains their baskets make.

Night veil'd the pole: all seem'd secure:
When, led by instinct sharp and sure,
Subsistence to provide,
A beast forth sallied on the scout,
Long back'd, long tail'd, with whisker'd snout,
And badger-colour'd hide.

He, entering at the study door,
Its ample area 'gan explore;
And something in the wind
Conjectured, sniffing round and round,
Better than all the books he found,
Food chiefly for the mind.

Just then, by adverse fate impress'd,
A dream disturb'd poor Bully's rest;
In sleep he seem'd to view
A rat fast clinging to the cage,
And, screaming at the sad presage,
Awoke and found it true.

For, aided both by ear and scent,
Right to his mark the monster went,—
Ah, Muse! forbear to speak
Minute the horrors that ensued;
His teeth were strong, the cage was wood,—
He left poor Bully's beak.

O, had he made that too his prey!
That beak, whence issued many a lay
Of such mellifluous tone,
Might have repaid him well, I wote,
For silencing so sweet a throat,
Fast stuck within his own.

Maria weeps,—the Muses mourn;—
So, when by Bacchanalians torn,
On Thracian Hebrus' side
The tree-enchanter Orpheus fell,
His head alone remain'd to tell
The cruel death he died.

THE ROSE.

THE rose had been wash'd, just wash'd in a shower,
Which Mary to Anna convey'd;
The plentiful moisture encumber'd the flower,
And weigh'd down its beautiful head.

The cup was all fill'd, and the leaves were all wet,
And it seem'd, to a fanciful view,
To weep for the buds it had left with regret
On the flourishing bush where it grew.

I hastily seized it, unfit as it was
For a nosegay, so dripping and drown'd,
And swinging it rudely, too rudely, alas!
I snapp'd it; it fell to the ground.

And such, I exclaim'd, is the pitiless part
Some act by the delicate mind,
Regardless of wringing and breaking a heart
Already to sorrow resign'd.

This elegant rose, had I shaken it less,
Might have bloom'd with its owner awhile;
And the tear that is wiped with a little address,
May be follow'd perhaps by a smile.

ODE TO APOLLO.

ON AN INK-GLASS ALMOST DRIED IN THE SUN.

PATRON of all those luckless brains
That, to the wrong side leaning,
Indite much metre with much pains,
And little or no meaning;

Ah, why, since oceans, rivers, streams,
That water all the nations,
Pay tribute to thy glorious beams,
In constant exhalations;

Why, stooping from the noon of day,
Too covetous of drink,
Apollo, hast thou stolen away
A poet's drop of ink?

Upborne into the viewless air,
It floats a vapour now,
Impell'd through regions dense and rare,
By all the winds that blow;

Ordain'd perhaps ere summer flies,
Combined with millions more,
To form an Iris in the skies,
Though black and foul before.

Illustrious drop! and happy then
Beyond the happiest lot,
Of all that ever pass'd my pen,
So soon to be forgot!

Phœbus, if such be thy design,
To place it in thy bow,
Give wit, that what is left may shine
With equal grace below.

THE POET'S NEW-YEAR'S GIFT.

TO MRS. (AFTERWARDS LADY) THROCKMORTON.

MARIA! I have every good
For thee wish'd many a time,
Both sad and in a cheerful mood,
But never yet in rhyme.

To wish thee fairer is no need,
More prudent, or more sprightly,
Or more ingenious, or more freed
From temper-flaws unsightly.

What favour then not yet possess'd
Can I for thee require,
In wedded love already bless'd,
To thy whole heart's desire?

None here is happy but in part;
Full bliss is bliss divine;
There dwells some wish in every heart,
And doubtless one in thine.

That wish, on some fair future day
Which Fate shall brightly gild,
('Tis blameless, be it what it may,)
I wish it all fulfill'd.

PAIRING TIME ANTICIPATED.

A FABLE.

I SHALL not ask Jean Jaques Rousseau[1],
If birds confabulate or no;
'Tis clear that they were always able
To hold discourse, at least in fable;
And e'en the child who knows no better
Than to interpret by the letter
A story of a cock and bull,
Must have a most uncommon skull.
It chanced then on a winter's day,
But warm and bright and calm as May,
The birds, conceiving a design
To forestall sweet St. Valentine,
In many an orchard, copse, and grove
Assembled on affairs of love,
And with much twitter and much chatter
Began to agitate the matter.
At length a Bullfinch, who could boast
More years and wisdom than the most,
Entreated, opening wide his beak,
A moment's liberty to speak;
And silence publicly enjoin'd,
Delivered briefly thus his mind:
My friends! be cautious how ye treat
The subject upon which we meet;
I fear we shall have winter yet.

[1] It was one of the whimsical speculations of this philosopher, that all fables which ascribe reason and speech to animals, should be withheld from children, as being only vehicles of deception. But what child was ever deceived by them, or can be, against the evidence of his senses?

A Finch, whose tongue knew no control,
With golden wing and satin poll,
A last year's bird, who ne'er had tried
What marriage means, thus pert replied:
Methinks the gentleman, quoth she,
Opposite in the apple-tree,
By his good will would keep us single
Till yonder heaven and earth shall mingle;
Or (which is likelier to befall)
Till death exterminate us all.
I marry without more ado;
My dear Dick Redcap, what say you?
Dick heard, and tweedling, ogling, bridling,
Turning short round, strutting, and sideling,
Attested, glad, his approbation
Of an immediate conjugation.
Their sentiments so well express'd
Influenced mightily the rest;
All pair'd, and each pair built a nest.
But though the birds were thus in haste,
The leaves came on not quite so fast,
And Destiny, that sometimes bears
An aspect stern on man's affairs,
Not altogether smiled on theirs.
The wind, of late breathed gently forth,
Now shifted east, and east by north;
Bare trees and shrubs but ill, you know,
Could shelter them from rain or snow:
Stepping into their nests, they paddled,
Themselves were chill'd, their eggs were addled;
Soon every father bird and mother
Grew quarrelsome, and peck'd each other,

Parted without the least regret,
Except that they had ever met,
And learn'd in future to be wiser
Than to neglect a good adviser.

MORAL.

Misses! the tale that I relate
This lesson seems to carry—
Chuse not alone a proper mate,
But proper time to marry.

THE DOG AND THE WATER-LILY.

NO FABLE.

THE noon was shady, and soft airs
Swept Ouse's silent tide,
When, 'scaped from literary cares,
I wander'd on his side.

My spaniel, prettiest of his race,
And high in pedigree,
(Two nymphs[1] adorn'd with every grace
That spaniel found for me,)

Now wanton'd lost in flags and reeds,
Now starting into sight,
Pursued the swallow o'er the meads
With scarce a slower flight.

It was the time when Ouse display'd
His lilies newly blown;
Their beauties I intent survey'd,
And one I wished my own.

[1] Sir Robert Gunning's daughters.

With cane extended far I sought
To steer it close to land;
But still the prize, though nearly caught,
Escaped my eager hand.

Beau mark'd my unsuccessful pains
With fix'd considerate face,
And puzzling set his puppy brains
To comprehend the case.

But with a cherup clear and strong,
Dispersing all his dream,
I thence withdrew, and follow'd long
The windings of the stream.

My ramble ended, I return'd;
Beau, trotting far before,
The floating wreath again discern'd,
And plunging left the shore.

I saw him with that lily cropp'd
Impatient swim to meet
My quick approach, and soon he dropp'd
The treasure at my feet.

Charm'd with the sight, The world, I cried,
Shall hear of this thy deed:
My dog shall mortify the pride
Of man's superior breed;

But chief myself I will enjoin,
Awake at duty's call,
To show a love as prompt as thine
To Him who gives me all.

TO

THE IMMORTAL MEMORY OF THE HALIBUT,

ON WHICH I DINED THIS DAY, MONDAY, APRIL 26, 1784.

WHERE hast thou floated, in what seas pursued
Thy pastime? When wast thou an egg new spawn'd,
Lost in the immensity of ocean's waste?
Roar as they might, the overbearing winds
That rock'd the deep, thy cradle, thou wast safe—
And in thy minikin and embryo state,
Attach'd to the firm leaf of some salt weed,
Didst outlive tempests, such as wrung and rack'd
The joints of many a stout and gallant bark,
And whelm'd them in the unexplored abyss.
Indebted to no magnet and no chart,
Nor under guidance of the polar fire,
Thou wast a voyager on many coasts,
Grazing at large in meadows submarine,
Where flat Batavia just emerging peeps
Above the brine,—where Caledonia's rocks
Beat back the surge,—and where Hibernia shoots
Her wondrous causeway far into the main.
—Wherever thou hast fed, thou little thought'st,
And I not more, that I should feed on thee.
Peace, therefore, and good health, and much good fish,
To him who sent thee! and success, as oft
As it descends into the billowy gulf,
To the same drag that caught thee!—Fare thee well!
Thy lot thy brethren of the slimy fin
Would envy, could they know that thou wast doom'd
To feed a bard, and to be praised in verse.

GRATITUDE.

ADDRESSED TO LADY HESKETH.

1786.

THIS cap, that so stately appears,
With ribbon-bound tassel on high,
Which seems by the crest that it rears
Ambitious of brushing the sky;
This cap to my Cousin I owe,
She gave it, and gave me beside,
Wreath'd into an elegant bow,
The ribbon with which it is tied.

This wheel-footed studying chair,
Contrived both for toil and repose,
Wide-elbow'd, and wadded with hair,
In which I both scribble and doze,
Bright-studded to dazzle the eyes,
And rival in lustre of that
In which, or astronomy lies,
Fair Cassiopeïa sat:

These carpets, so soft to the foot,
Caledonia's traffic and pride,
O spare them, ye knights of the boot,
Escaped from a cross-country ride!
This table and mirror within,
Secure from collision and dust,
At which I oft shave cheek and chin,
And periwig nicely adjust:

This moveable structure of shelves,
For its beauty admired and its use,
And charged with octavos and twelves,
The gayest I had to produce;
Where, flaming in scarlet and gold,
My poems enchanted I view,
And hope, in due time, to behold
My Iliad and Odyssey too:

This china, that decks the alcove,
Which here people call a buffet,
But what the gods call it above,
Has ne'er been reveal'd to us yet:
These curtains, that keep the room warm
Or cool as the season demands,
Those stoves that for pattern and form
Seem the labour of Mulciber's hands:

All these are not half that I owe
To One, from our earliest youth
To me ever ready to show
Benignity, friendship, and truth;
For time, the destroyer declared
And foe of our perishing kind,
If even her face he has spared,
Much less could he alter her mind.

Thus compass'd about with the goods
And chattels of leisure and ease,
I indulge my poetical moods
In many such fancies as these;

A Finch, whose tongue knew no control,
With golden wing and satin poll,
A last year's bird, who ne'er had tried
What marriage means, thus pert replied:
Methinks the gentleman, quoth she,
Opposite in the apple-tree,
By his good will would keep us single
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Or (which is likelier to befall)
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Swept Ouse's silent tide,
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And high in pedigree,
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With scarce a slower flight.

It was the time when Ouse display'd
His lilies newly blown;
Their beauties I intent survey'd,
And one I wished my own.

[1] Sir Robert Gunning's daughters.

And fancies I fear they will seem—
Poets' goods are not often so fine;
The poets will swear that I dream,
When I sing of the splendour of mine.

LINES,

COMPOSED FOR A MEMORIAL OF

ASHLEY COWPER, ESQ.

IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS DEATH.

BY HIS NEPHEW WILLIAM OF WESTON.

JUNE, 1788.

FAREWELL! endued with all that could engage
All hearts to love thee, both in youth and age!
In prime of life, for sprightliness enroll'd
Among the gay, yet virtuous as the old;

In life's last stage, (O blessings rarely found!)
Pleasant as youth with all its blossoms crown'd!
Through every period of this changeful state
Unchanged thyself—wise, good, affectionate!

Marble may flatter, and lest this should seem
O'ercharged with praises on so dear a theme,
Although thy worth be more than half supprest,
Love *shall* be satisfied, and veil the rest.

SONG ON PEACE.

WRITTEN IN THE SUMMER OF 1783, AT THE REQUEST OF LADY AUSTEN, WHO GAVE THE SENTIMENT.

AIR—"*My fond shepherds of late,*" *&c.*

No longer I follow a sound;
  No longer a dream I pursue;
O happiness! not to be found,
  Unattainable treasure, adieu!

I have sought thee in splendour and dress,
  In the regions of pleasure and taste;
I have sought thee, and seem'd to possess,
  But have proved thee a vision at last.

An humble ambition and hope
  The voice of true wisdom inspires;
'Tis sufficient, if Peace be the scope,
  And the summit of all our desires.

Peace may be the lot of the mind
  That seeks it in meekness and love;
But rapture and bliss are confined
  To the glorified spirits above.

SONG.

ALSO WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF LADY AUSTEN.

AIR—"*The Lass of Pattie's Mill.*"

WHEN all within is peace,
  How nature seems to smile!
Delights that never cease,
  The live-long day beguile.

From morn to dewy eve,
With open hand she showers
Fresh blessings to deceive,
And soothe the silent hours.

It is content of heart
Gives nature power to please;
The mind that feels no smart
Enlivens all it sees,
Can make a wintry sky
Seem bright as smiling May,
And evening's closing eye
As peep of early day.

The vast majestic globe,
So beauteously array'd
In nature's various robe,
With wondrous skill display'd,
Is to a mourner's heart
A dreary wild at best;
It flutters to depart,
And longs to be at rest.

EPITAPH ON JOHNSON.

JANUARY, 1785.

HERE Johnson lies, a sage by all allow'd,
Whom to have bred, may well make England proud;
Whose prose was eloquence, by wisdom taught,
The graceful vehicle of virtuous thought;
Whose verse may claim, grave masculine and strong,
Superior praise to the mere poet's song;

Who many a noble gift from Heaven possess'd,
And faith at last, alone worth all the rest.
O man, immortal by a double prize,
By fame on earth, by glory in the skies!

TO

MISS C——, ON HER BIRTHDAY.

1786.

How many between east and west,
  Disgrace their parent earth,
Whose deeds constrain us to detest
  The day that gave them birth!
Not so when Stella's natal morn
  Revolving months restore,
We can rejoice that she was born,
  And wish her born once more!

THE FLATTING-MILL.

AN ILLUSTRATION.

When a bar of pure silver or ingot of gold
  Is sent to be flatted or wrought into length,
It is pass'd between cylinders often, and roll'd
  In an engine of utmost mechanical strength.

Thus tortured and squeezed, at last it appears
  Like a loose heap of ribbon, a glittering show,
Like music it tinkles and rings in your ears,
  And warm'd by the pressure is all in a glow.

This process achieved, it is doom'd to sustain
  The thump-after-thump of a gold-beater's mallet,
And at last is of service in sickness or pain
  To cover a pill from a delicate palate.

Alas for the Poet, who dares undertake
  To urge reformation of national ill!
His head and his heart are both likely to ache
  With the double employment of mallet and mill.

If he wish to instruct, he must learn to delight,
  Smooth, ductile, and even, his fancy must flow,
Must tinkle and glitter like gold to the sight,
  And catch in its progress a sensible glow.

After all he must beat it as thin and as fine
  As the leaf that enfolds what an invalid swallows,
For truth is unwelcome, however divine,
  And unless you adorn it, a nausea follows.

EPITAPH ON A HARE.

Here lies, whom hound did ne'er pursue,
  Nor swifter greyhound follow,
Whose foot ne'er tainted morning dew,
  Nor ear heard huntsman's halloo;

Old Tiney, surliest of his kind,
  Who, nursed with tender care,
And to domestic bounds confined,
  Was still a wild Jack hare.

Though duly from my hand he took
His pittance every night,
He did it with a jealous look,
And, when he could, would bite.

His diet was of wheaten bread,
And milk, and oats, and straw;
Thistles, or lettuces instead,
With sand to scour his maw.

On twigs of hawthorn he regaled,
On pippins' russet peel,
And, when his juicy salads fail'd,
Sliced carrot pleased him well.

A Turkey carpet was his lawn,
Whereon he loved to bound,
To skip and gambol like a fawn,
And swing his rump around.

His frisking was at evening hours,
For then he lost his fear,
But most before approaching showers,
Or when a storm drew near.

Eight years and five round rolling moons
He thus saw steal away,
Dozing out all his idle noons,
And every night at play.

I kept him for his humour's sake,
For he would oft beguile
My heart of thoughts that made it ache,
And force me to a smile.

But now beneath his walnut shade
He finds his long last home,
And waits, in snug concealment laid,
Till gentler Puss shall come.

He, still more aged, feels the shocks
From which no care can save,
And, partner once of Tiney's box,
Must soon partake his grave.

EPITAPHIUM ALTERUM.

Hic etiam jacet,
Qui totum novennium vixit,
Puss.
Siste paulisper,
Qui præteriturus es,
Et tecum sic reputa—
Hunc neque canis venaticus,
Nec plumbum missile,
Nec laqueus,
Nec imbres nimii,
Confecêre:
Tamen mortuus est—
Et moriar ego.

THE FOLLOWING

ACCOUNT OF THE TREATMENT OF HIS HARES

WAS INSERTED BY COWPER IN THE GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE.

In the year 1774, being much indisposed both in mind and body, incapable of diverting myself either with company or books, and yet in a condition that made some diversion necessary, I was glad of any thing that would engage my attention, without fatiguing it. The children of a neighbour of mine had a leveret given them for a plaything; it was at that time about three months old. Understanding better how to tease the poor creature than to feed it, and soon becoming weary of their charge, they readily consented that their father, who saw it pining and growing leaner every day, should offer it to my acceptance. I was willing enough to take the prisoner under my protection, perceiving that, in the management of such an animal, and in the attempt to tame it, I should find just that sort of employment which my case required. It was soon known among the neighbours that I was pleased with the present, and the consequence was, that in a short time I had as many leverets offered to me as would have stocked a paddock. I undertook the care of three, which it is necessary that I should here distinguish by the names I gave them—Puss, Tiney, and Bess. Notwithstanding the two feminine appellatives, I must inform you, that they were all males. Immediately commencing carpenter, I built them houses to sleep in; each had a separate apartment, so contrived that their ordure would pass through the bottom of it; an earthen pan placed under each received whatsoever fell, which being duly emptied and washed, they

were thus kept perfectly sweet and clean. In the daytime they had the range of a hall, and at night retired each to his own bed, never intruding into that of another.

Puss grew presently familiar, would leap into my lap, raise himself upon his hinder feet, and bite the hair from my temples. He would suffer me to take him up, and to carry him about in my arms, and has more than once fallen fast asleep upon my knee. He was ill three days, during which time I nursed him, kept him apart from his fellows, that they might not molest him, (for, like many other wild animals, they persecute one of their own species that is sick), and by constant care, and trying him with a variety of herbs, restored him to perfect health. No creature could be more grateful than my patient after his recovery; a sentiment which he most significantly expressed by licking my hand, first the back of it, then the palm, then every finger separately, then between all the fingers, as if anxious to leave no part of it unsaluted; a ceremony which he never performed but once again upon a similar occasion. Finding him extremely tractable, I made it my custom to carry him always after breakfast into the garden, where he hid himself generally under the leaves of a cucumber vine, sleeping or chewing the cud till evening; in the leaves also of that vine he found a favourite repast. I had not long habituated him to this taste of liberty, before he began to be impatient for the return of the time when he might enjoy it. He would invite me to the garden by drumming upon my knee, and by a look of such expression, as it was not possible to misinterpret. If this rhetoric did not immediately succeed, he would take the skirt of my coat between his teeth, and pull it with all his force. Thus Puss might be said to be perfectly tamed, the shyness of his nature was done away, and on the whole it was visible by many symptoms, which I have not room to enumerate, that he

was happier in human society than when shut up with his natural companions.

Not so Tiney; upon him the kindest treatment had not the least effect. He too was sick, and in his sickness had an equal share of my attention; but if after his recovery I took the liberty to stroke him, he would grunt, strike with his fore feet, spring forward, and bite. He was however very entertaining in his way; even his surliness was matter of mirth, and in his play he preserved such an air of gravity, and performed his feats with such a solemnity of manner, that in him too I had an agreeable companion.

Bess, who died soon after he was full grown, and whose death was occasioned by his being turned into his box, which had been washed, while it was yet damp, was a hare of great humour and drollery. Puss was tamed by gentle usage; Tiney was not to be tamed at all; and Bess had a courage and confidence that made him tame from the beginning. I always admitted them into the parlour after supper, when the carpet affording their feet a firm hold, they would frisk, and bound, and play a thousand gambols, in which Bess, being remarkably strong and fearless, was always superior to the rest, and proved himself the Vestris of the party. One evening the cat, being in the room, had the hardiness to pat Bess upon the cheek, an indignity which he resented by drumming upon her back with such violence that the cat was happy to escape from under his paws, and hide herself.

I describe these animals as having each a character of his own. Such they were in fact, and their countenances were so expressive of that character, that, when I looked only on the face of either, I immediately knew which it was. It is said that a shepherd, however numerous his flock, soon becomes so familiar with their features, that he can, by that indication only,

distinguish each from all the rest; and yet, to a common observer, the difference is hardly perceptible. I doubt not that the same discrimination in the cast of countenances would be discoverable in hares, and am persuaded that among a thousand of them no two could be found exactly similar; a circumstance little suspected by those who have not had opportunity to observe it. These creatures have a singular sagacity in discovering the minutest alteration that is made in the place to which they are accustomed, and instantly apply their nose to the examination of a new object. A small hole being burnt in the carpet, it was mended with a patch, and that patch in a moment underwent the strictest scrutiny. They seem too to be very much directed by the smell in the choice of their favourites: to some persons, though they saw them daily, they could never be reconciled, and would even scream when they attempted to touch them; but a miller coming in engaged their affections at once; his powdered coat had charms that were irresistible. It is no wonder that my intimate acquaintance with these specimens of the kind has taught me to hold the sportsman's amusement in abhorrence; he little knows what amiable creatures he persecutes, of what gratitude they are capable, how cheerful they are in their spirits, what enjoyment they have of life, and that, impressed as they seem with a peculiar dread of man, it is only because man gives them peculiar cause for it.

That I may not be tedious, I will just give a short summary of those articles of diet that suit them best.

I take it to be a general opinion that they graze, but it is an erroneous one, at least grass is not their staple; they seem rather to use it medicinally, soon quitting it for leaves of almost any kind. Sowthistle, dandelion, and lettuce, are their favourite vegetables, especially the last. I discovered by accident that fine white sand is in great estimation with them; I

suppose as a digestive. It happened, that I was cleaning a birdcage when the hares were with me; I placed a pot filled with such sand upon the floor, which being at once directed to by a strong instinct, they devoured voraciously; since that time I have generally taken care to see them well supplied with it. They account green corn a delicacy, both blade and stalk, but the ear they seldom eat: straw of any kind, especially wheat-straw, is another of their dainties; they will feed greedily upon oats, but if furnished with clean straw never want them; it serves them also for a bed, and, if shaken up daily, will be kept sweet and dry for a considerable time. They do not indeed require aromatic herbs, but will eat a small quantity of them with great relish, and are particularly fond of the plant called musk; they seem to resemble sheep in this, that, if their pasture be too succulent, they are very subject to the rot; to prevent which, I always made bread their principal nourishment, and, filling a pan with it cut into small squares, placed it every evening in their chambers, for they feed only at evening and in the night; during the winter, when vegetables were not to be got, I mingled this mess of bread with shreds of carrot, adding to it the rind of apples cut extremely thin; for, though they are fond of the paring, the apple itself disgusts them. These however not being a sufficient substitute for the juice of summer herbs, they must at this time be supplied with water; but so placed, that they cannot overset it into their beds. I must not omit, that occasionally they are much pleased with twigs of hawthorn, and of the common brier, eating even the very wood when it is of considerable thickness.

Bess, I have said, died young; Tiney lived to be nine years old, and died at last, I have reason to think, of some hurt in his loins by a fall; Puss is still living, and has just completed his tenth year, discovering no signs of decay, nor even of age,

except that he has grown more discreet and less frolicsome than he was. I cannot conclude without observing, that I have lately introduced a dog to his acquaintance, a spaniel that had never seen a hare to a hare that had never seen a spaniel. I did it with great caution, but there was no real need of it. Puss discovered no token of fear, nor Marquis the least symptom of hostility. There is therefore, it should seem, no natural antipathy between dog and hare, but the pursuit of the one occasions the flight of the other, and the dog pursues because he is trained to it; they eat bread at the same time out of the same hand, and are in all respects sociable and friendly.

I should not do complete justice to my subject, did I not add, that they have no ill scent belonging to them, that they are indefatigably nice in keeping themselves clean, for which purpose nature has furnished them with a brush under each foot; and that they are never infested by any vermin.

May 28, 1784.

MEMORANDUM FOUND AMONG MR. COWPER'S PAPERS.

Tuesday, March 9, 1786.

This day died poor Puss, aged eleven years eleven months. He died between twelve and one at noon, of mere old age, and apparently without pain.

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